

LITERARY  
AND  
THEOLOGICAL REVIEW.

---

NO. XVIII.—JUNE, 1838.

---

ART. I.—THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

By NATHANIEL HEWITT, D. D.

WHEN good works are done on wrong principles, the labourers forfeit the reward of well-doers; "for he that striveth for the mastery is not crowned except he strive lawfully." The faults of the workmen, moreover, soon spread like leaven to the works themselves, and they are spoiled also. The propagation of the Gospel in the world, or, in the words of inspiration, "the edification of the body of Christ," in which "men are workers together with God," is a work where principles enter into the moving, instrumental, material and final causes of all that is done. Here erroneous principles vitiate the whole. If there be any thing amiss in the builders, it will reappear in the building; and as the disciple is not above his master, if teachers err in doctrine, the taught must err likewise. Hence the necessity of sound principles in all who take part in any way in the advancement of the Gospel.

In order that the kingdom of Christ in this world may be promoted on sound principles, the true nature of it must be understood. The messengers of Christ, are not like the

couriers of earthly kings, who carry sealed despatches, which they may not and cannot read or understand. The servants of Christ are ambassadors, not post-riders; and are—wondrous words—“*in Christ's stead.*” The way and manner of proceeding in spreading the word of the kingdom, will, of course, be modelled after the way and manner in which the kingdom itself is understood and regarded. For as the kingdom of Christ is a regeneration—not a manipulation—a manufacture—the propagators reproduce themselves in the propagated, and the offspring bears the likeness of the parent. A vital union to Christ by holy espousals can alone make the Church fruitful in the children of God.

It is then fundamental in all inquiries after the way to diffuse the light of life in this sepulchre-world of ours,—*What is the distinction and formal nature of the kingdom of Christ on the earth?*

In answer, I reply—That it is not a natural but a supernatural kingdom: supernatural—not pro—or anti—but supernatural. Grace does not annihilate nature, but prae-supposes and sub-ordinates it, and renews, reforms, perfects and glorifies it. Grace is in and super nature as a branch from a good olive tree is grafted on the stock of a wild; or as the grave bodies of the saints are the substitute of their resurrection bodies. Sin and death are infra-natural, infernal, and drag down nature. Grace is the supernatural antagonist and victor of the infer-natural powers of sin and death, and redeems nature from its fall beneath their monstrous oppression. The God of nature and the God of grace is one.—“I and my father are one,” said the Theanthropos. Human nature in the person of Christ, was, without change in its essence and form, assumed by the divine; and by a hypos-tatical union with it, ennobled and perfected: yet though thus glorified, it is human nature still, entire in all its parts and properties. So in the kingdom of heaven on earth, grace assumes to itself nature, and working after the model of the head, forms a new man after the image of the Son of God, who is the first-born among many brethren. The inhabitation of the Holy Ghost assimilates the children of the kingdom to their theanthropic Lord and brother, and mystically unites them—for he that is joined with the Lord is one spirit.

Being super-natural, the kingdom of heaven is of course super-rational. Reason is an organ for truth, but not of



truth : not originally and of itself luminous, but susceptible of illumination : a disciple not a master—the servant of truth not its Lord. Grace does no violence to reason. Sin, like mephitic vapours, suffocates the intellectual powers, and reason gasps, in ghastly and abortive attempts to inhale from pestilential choke-damps the balmy inspiration of life.—“The world by wisdom knew not God.” But grace like the pure air of heaven, first restores and quiets the tortured and exhausted organs, and then fills them. “In thy light we shall see light.” “Arise, shine; for the glory of God is risen upon thee.”

Nor is the kingdom of heaven a philosopheme—a gnosis. It is not an invention of man, but a revelation of God : not an argument, but a testimony. Faith, not reason, receives it; and its result is life, not knowledge. “The words I speak unto you,” said Christ, “they are spirit and they are life.” “Gnosis puffeth up; charity edifieth.” The gospel of the kingdom is not a philosophic exposé of the fabric of creation, providence and grace, spread open to reason : “for faith is the evidence—the elenchus—argument—of things not seen” and consequently by faith we *understand* that the worlds—*ταυτὰς αἰωνάς*—the dispensations of creation primarily and chiefly, and of providence and grace, consecutively, were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” To look for the causes and reasons of things therefore, in the things themselves, is to search for them where they are not. “By faith we understand” hence not by reason and experience. “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” The Peripatetics walk not in Solomon’s Porch.

Nor is the kingdom of heaven Paradisaic. That dispensation was founded in the innocence of man, and terminated with it. God does not restore the first Adam, and give him another opportunity to gain as a head of his race, eternal life. Nor has he given to each of his children that covenant which he at first gave to him, as the common representative of all. The kingdom of heaven brings for us another head—a second Adam who is the Lord from heaven and is an everlasting Father; and the deep foundations of it are laid in the abyss of our guilt and woe. “The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.” He receiveth sinners and eateth with them. Sin and death

are the only decypherers of the hieroglyph of redemption. Sin and death dragged down the first man from his palace and throne in paradise, where he reigned as King of the world; but they led up the second man to the throne of glory, where he reigns a priest upon his throne, king of righteousness and king of peace. "For he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." To the innocent then and the happy, the kingdom of Christ is without meaning or use; nay, it is repulsive and monstrous; "to the Jew a stumbling block, and to the Greek foolishness." The supposition of self-efficient powers in man, asserts the continuance of the Paradisaic kingdom and denies the fall. Self-correction—self-restoration—self-expurgation—self-election of the right and the good—self-perseverance—all imply fundamental innocence. These are all vital acts of wisdom and goodness: and can be done by none except those who are alive unto God; and free from the dominion of sin. If sin reigns in man, it reigns unto death; and what self-efficacy for self-redemption can there be in such a case? Sin in man, is man in sin; and how can he be in sin and out of it—under sin and over it—the slave of sin and the Lord of it at one and the same time? Satan is not divided against himself. Man in sin is not divided against himself; self cannot be divided against self. The covenant of Paradise contemplated man in his integrity and therefore self-efficient—the Gospel contemplates him in depravity, and therefore self-deficient.

But if man is without self-restorative powers, he is not blameless for his continuance in sin? He would be blameless if he had no restorative powers. The fault is not in man's powers, but in man's *self*.

There is no self-restoration, because self itself abhors it. There can be no self-motion towards self-denial, the element of restoration. Moreover, sin is a death as well as a crime, and is its punishment. This punishment is spiritual death, which consists in the loss of God's gracious presence in the soul. God forsakes the sinning soul. Hence David deprecates the divine wrath on his adultery and murder, by imploring God not to "cast him away from his presence, nor to take his Holy Spirit from him." When God forsakes the soul, his image, the effect of that presence, departs with him, as the image of one before a mirror vanishes when he

turns away from looking upon it. When the image of God is gone, the soul becomes carnal—destitute of the light and life of holiness and is “dead in sin.”

Now in order that a sinner may be a self-redeemer from sin, he must propitiate God whom he has offended, and recover the lost light and life of his complacent presence. But this he cannot do; because his propitiatory acts would not be animated by that love to God, that spiritual life, which can alone render them pleasing to God; for by the supposition he is without life when he is seeking to recover it. His works, therefore, are dead works; and he is dead in sin.—The inquiry then, whether man is culpable for remaining in sin if he be incapable of self-restoration, should be merged in this other and previous question—has man sinned against God, and has God justly forsaken him? If justly forsaken, he alone is the blameable cause of all the evils resulting from that desertion. Dr. Smalley has incautiously infringed on this, and without intending it, opened the door for Pelagius. Referring to the axiom of sound theology, that God loses not his right to command where man has through his own fault lost his power to obey; he attempts its refutation by an inapt comparison. “If a man wickedly cuts off his hand,” says he, “ought he afterwards to be commanded to use it.” The fallacy here, is in supposing this to be a parallel case. The comparison contains more than the thing compared. The question is not whether a man is bound to work with a hand which he has not, but whether he may justly suffer the consequences involved in the want of a hand which he has wickedly destroyed. May he say to God—“Repeal thy law for my benefit; and give me bread for I cannot work: or else restore my lost hand, that I may provide my own bread. As I cannot work, it would be cruelty to leave me to starve. Thou hast lost thy right to enforce the law on me. “He that will not work, neither shall he eat,” for I have exempted myself from that law by the destruction of my hand. Thou must create me a new hand before I can be justly required either to work or starve.”—Now is it not evident that the original claims of the law appear in the penalty inflicted on the disobedient. These claims give to punishment its justice; and if these claims cannot be enforced, punishment must cease. May man say to God, “Show me thy face, that I may love thee. I cannot love thee if I know thee not in thy beauty and glory.—

I must perish if I love thee not. Repeal thy law for my sake. Thou hast said "I love them that love me; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." I have despised thee, and thou hast forsaken me. Cast me not off forever, for thou oughtest not to enforce thy law upon me, seeing that I cannot love thee whilst thou hidest thy presence from me.— Give me thy power, for I cannot ascend up, thou art gone from me. I have exempted myself from thy law which says, "Love me or perish," by wickedly provoking thee to withdraw thyself from me." In order that I may not perish, repeal thy law which inflicts on me the hiding of thy face as a penalty of my former transgressions, and require not of me love to thee, in order that I may enjoy thy love." It is plain now, that the claims of God's law on fallen man's obedience, gives to his punishment its justice. The inability of sinners, therefore, to restore themselves, is the result of laws still in force against them, and this inability will remain until these laws are either satisfied or repealed.— This inability opens the door for Christ; "for when we were *without strength*, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." By satisfying—not by destroying the claims of the law, the second man restores the *lost hand* and renders it immortal: "he of his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, might live unto God"—"by whose stripes we are healed."

Neither is the kingdom of heaven Mosaic. Moses taught the Gospel in outward shadows, which were without a quickening power, save only as they prefigured the future reality full of grace and truth; and which by being misunderstood and misused, became a dead and death-dispensing letter. The law was added to former promises to Abraham, because of transgression, and entered that sin might abound: and this was done for a double purpose, to reveal and bind on man his sin and death, until set at liberty by the Redeemer, and to shew him that law works both moral and ceremonial, as they give him knowledge of sin and death, could not minister to him righteousness and life. "The law worketh wrath." By the law is the knowledge of sin. "In those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins every year." "They could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience." The sanctified Israelites read the Gospel in the law, and like Paul, found it a schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ. "For I," says he,

"through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God;" with "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Hence the introduction of works, as causal in any sense in the matter of man's restoration to God, brings back, not Moses, but the Scribes and Pharisees, who read Moses with a veil on their hearts; so that they could not look to the end of that which was abolished. Now the Spirit is received, not by works of the law, but by the hearing of faith. Every sort of work of whatever name or nature, which is relied on as the ground or means of receiving the spirit, is Pharisaical. The hearing of faith is the channel, and the only channel, of the waters of life. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God:" not of works, lest any man should boast. "Boasting is excluded by the law of faith."

Neither is it Satanic. Satan's doctrine is, that God is for the creation, and not the creation for God. His fundamental maxim is, make use of God for thine own ends. He would subordinate God to himself, and not himself to God. His inquiry is, what would I have of him, not what would he have of me? He regards God only as a means. "Fall down and worship me," said he to the Son of God. Whatever is made to terminate in man is Satanism. In the kingdom of heaven all things are of God—all things are through him and all to him. "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee." The subjective grace of the Gospel is self denial, and it terminates in that charity which seeketh not its own. The universal ethical principle of the kingdom of heaven is, that whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Consequently the practical operation of the Gospel on man, is not an emendation, but a mortification and a resurrection. It corrects not his mistakes, but it renews *him*—and that not by an education, but by a crucifixion—dying to himself and rising to God; and so a new creature.

Neither is the kingdom of heaven a temporal kingdom—a fifth monarchy. The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation. He is not a Jew which is one outwardly. As many as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek—there is neither bond nor free—there is neither male nor female—for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. The fundamental axiom of the fifth monarchy system is, that the regeneration of man begins out-

wardly and by changing the external state, the internal follows after as of course. Its elementary principle is, that faith cometh by revelation. Governments, laws, customs, education, occupation, food and raiment, domestic relations, &c., must be all changed first, and put upon a right footing, and then mankind will be regenerated. It would make the fruit good, that the tree may be made good. Moreover this system locates salvation on earth, and terminates in an outward golden age. It would have the resurrection to be past already. But the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven speaketh on this wise : " whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved." The visible instrumentality by which this is effected, is briefly comprehended in the Apostle's programme of the ministry of the word : " How shall they call on him on whom they have not believed ; and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ; and how shall they hear without a preacher ; and how shall they preach except they be sent ? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Ears to hear are the sole subjective prerequisite for the admission of the word of life. To bring men to Christ, no previous change in their external state in any other particular whatever, is necessary, except that of being brought under the sound of the Gospel trumpet. If they hear not this, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead. The projects of a revolutionary and reformatory character set forth under colour of preparing the world for the millenium, exclude the Gospel, and in effect tread it under foot. All the salutary changes in society contemplated in the diffusion of true religion, are the results of the Gospel actually received and obeyed. The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened."

From this rapid sketch of the distinctive characteristics of the Christian religion, in contradistinction from the chief errors which are abroad respecting it, it will easily appear what qualifications are demanded in those who are fitted to preach it both at home and abroad, of God.

As the kingdom of Christ is supernatural, redemptive, spiritual, invisible and eternal, it is obvious that those who propagate this kingdom among men, sustain a singular office ; and if they fill and execute it worthily, possess qualities as extraordinary as the work is which they perform. That

there is a close affinity between the preachers of Christ and Christ himself, we have his express declaration : "He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." And to the Apostles he said, "He that despiseth you despiseth me." Personal qualities in Gospel ministers, which bear the image and superscription of the master they serve, are demanded in this apostolic precept, "Be ye examples to the flock." Our Lord seems to intimate, not obscurely, a personal attribute, when he called his disciples "the light of the world, and the salt of the earth." There is indeed a distinction between the word of God and its preacher. These, in fact, can never be confounded. But the word of God reaches the hearer through the medium of the preacher ; and as the light of heaven is affected by the medium through which it passes, so the light of life, in the words which the Holy Ghost speaketh, is affected by the preacher. Otherwise the word of God could never be corrupted. God has given his word to men under conditions which require translation, exposition and vocal publication. Unless, then, the gift of infallible inspiration is bestowed upon all who are employed in any way in making known to the ignorant, the revealed mind and will of God, the pure revelation of the Spirit of truth, must take, in its transmission through the interpreter and the preacher, more or less of their own qualities. "Be ye clean who bear the vessels of the Lord." Christ affirms that, "He that is of God, heareth God's words." The apostle repeats in its course the same, when he says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him ; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." Personal qualities in the hearer are here demanded, that the word of God—the things of the Spirit, may not merely be received cordially, but even understood. Much more then, are personal qualities corresponding to the nature of the work, necessary in him who is not only to hear, but to speak the words of eternal life. If he that is of God, heareth God's words—if Christ's sheep hear his voice—if he that is spiritual, judgeth all things—if he that hath the unction of the Holy One, knoweth all things—if all who go to Christ, are taught of God—theodidactoi—it is plain that subjective qualities precede objective acts. Who hears God's words ? He that is of God. Does he then, become of God by hearing, when



he must be of God in order to hear? Does hearing Christ's voice make the sheep, or are they sheep before they hear? It is certain now, that the words of God make not themselves to be understood by an intrinsic demonstration, but they presuppose a hearing ear and a discerning mind. That one may hear God's words, it is not enough that he be of the grammar and the lexicon—of the academy and the porch—he must be—ponderous words—*of God*. All, therefore, of the followers of Christ and children of the kingdom, are denominated *the called of God*. The church—the ekklesia from kaleo—is the multitude who have “heard and learned of the Father.” If now, a special, divine, efficacious call—an anointing of the Holy One, only can introduce men into light and life of the kingdom of heaven, much more may we conclude that a divine and holy vocation only can introduce men into the office of its ministry. “No man taketh this honor upon himself, but he that is called of God.” “How shall we preach, except we be sent.” “The sheep know not the voice of strangers, and a stranger will they not follow.” “Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?” “Feed the church of God, of which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.” “The Holy Ghost said, separate me Paul and Barnabas.” “God gave pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ.” Self-vocation, self-institution, self-preparation, self-mission, or the election, education and mission of men, are not nor can be that special and divine call which the word of God makes essential to the Christian ministry.

Natural and acquired endowments, and the instructions of men are also requisites in the preparation of one for this vocation, and his due admission to the sacred office. These are, though necessary, subordinate. But the distinctive mark of the minister of Christ, which separates him as far as the heaven is from the earth, from all who run without being sent, is that divine call, which renders the subject a chosen vessel to bear the name of the Lord. How this inward, special and spiritual election of God to the sacred office, is made to the subject, and what that evidence of the spirit to the spirit, which assures, emboldens and determines the soul, belongs to the mysteries of the kingdom. It is a white stone, and a new name, which no man knoweth save him that receiveth it. Here let me not

be misunderstood. I speak not of a divine call in the soul of man, which can be made audible to others, and be a ground for their recognition of his election of God ; but of that which the subject can perceive, and by which he may be governed. Speaking of this "secret call," "of which," says Calvin, "every minister is conscious to himself before God, but which is not known to the Church," he adds, "This secret call, however, is the certain testimony of our heart, that we accept the office offered to us, not from ambition or avarice, or any other unlawful motive, but from a sincere fear of God, and an ardent zeal for the edification of the Church."

This definition brings the case fully within the mysterious and the divine ; for a pure heart animated with zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls ; and devoid of ambition and avarice, is in this world, and in this age of it, the profoundest of mysteries and the greatest of rarities. Man's heart must pass through the furnace, that it may be thus pure, as speaks the prophet Malachi : "The Lord shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver ; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." This divine qualification was rare in the apostle's days. "I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state, for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." But this internal character—this special and extraordinary work of the Spirit—this divine call and election, is with the utmost facility and assurance now made ; and if we believed every spirit, we should infer that Moses' prayer was answered, and that all God's people were prophets. But although disinterested love of the truth, and zeal for Christ's cause, becomes common in the profession of it, and unclean in the abuse of it, yet we must assert its necessity on the one hand and its rarity on the other ; and expose ourselves to the reproach of maintaining a self-denial in the ministry of Christ, which amounts to self-annihilation. Just as all gracious and spiritual operations of the Holy Ghost are counterfeited, and under pretence of special illumination, all manner of ridiculous and wicked imaginations and passions, have been impiously ascribed to divine power, so weak, insane and crafty men have alleged a special call as their authority for bringing forth the greatest enormities. But there were false prophets in multitudes, and false apostles, and deceitful workers, in

the times of the Old and New Testament ; yet this did not prevent Elijah or Paul from asserting and claiming their own mission to be from God. It is the policy of Satan to counterfeit the way of truth, that he may bring it into contempt, and thus draw away, if possible, the very elect.

But in our day, this vital truth of a special divine call to the ministry, is cast away for a different reason. Within the last twenty-five years, the bent of the Church has been towards its outward advancement, rather than its inward purity, and growth in holiness and peace. To multiply converts, and plant churches, and send the Gospel to every creature, has not only been the great work, but also almost the only concern of the great body of Christians ; so much so, that with multitudes, the whole of religion consists in propagating it. Like some species of insects, who lay their eggs and then die, these make and exhaust their wisdom and piety, in the acts of communicating it to others. When now the outward growth of the church is the chief end of its ministers and members, by an easy and natural transition, they soon regard success in attaining it, as the criterion of both gifts and grace. Whatever, then, shall conduce to success—to easy, rapid, and universal success—is, for that reason, deemed to be scriptural, acceptable to God, and profitable to man. On the other hand, all those doctrines, and precepts, and ordinances, which throw an obstruction in any way to the multiplication of converts, or to the multiplication of the means of making converts, are looked on with an evil eye. They are deemed to be inauspicious and malevolent. Any plausible excuse—any flimsy reason, for putting them aside, and clearing the way of what they suppose is the chariot of salvation prevails, and in a summary manner, they throw down the landmarks and root up the hedges of the sacred enclosure of the church, that all around may instantly enter in any direction, and save the time, and trouble, and danger, and final disappointment of looking for the “straight gate,” and “narrow way.”

Among these obstacles to an immediate and wide spread of the Gospel, which is nearly swept away, is that divine inward call to the work of the ministry of which we speak. The nature of this spiritual preparation, renders it no easy matter for the children of God themselves, to attain to a good degree of assurance about their own duty in this case. Just as time, trial, self-examination, thorough investigation into the nature and evidences of regeneration, produce delay,

and lessen the numbers of those who otherwise would crowd into the communion of the Church, so the like strict and serious scrutiny into the nature and evidences of a divine vocation to the ministry, will embarrass the rapid multiplication of preachers. Consequently, the idea of a special call of God, made known to the hidden man of the heart, by the consciousness of an unreserved dedication of all, to the glory of God, is long since exploded, and given up to moulder away with the rubbish of the dark ages. For if a man can make himself a christian, he can make himself a minister: and if a purpose to serve God, is conversion, so a purpose to preach is a call to preach. The purpose with the outward acts following, will, like the popish sacraments, confer grace *ex opere operato*. Hence no previous scrutiny of the heart, no weighing in the balances of the sanctuary, are needful. In answer to the question—"who is sufficient for these things," the reply is—every one who will but set about the doing of them. And if a man can make himself a minister, he can make others ministers: for he has only to adduce the considerations which swayed his own will to purpose, and then he will succeed with not a few to follow his example. In this way ministers can be multiplied just as sailors and soldiers are recruited.

But I must hasten to the conclusion. The present day is full of peril to all—most especially to the young; and most of all to young ministers. There is no defence for us, except the secret place of the Most High. We must turn to the strong hold. Without are fightings. Jerusalem is compassed with armies. The everlasting mountains must furnish us a hiding place, until this indignation be overpast. Whichever way we turn, the deceivableness of unrighteousness and strong delusions assault us. There are false Christs, and they do signs and wonders, and the world is gone after them. In this evil day, our strength is to stand. We can evince our call of God to the work of ministry to ourselves and to others in divers ways: and may also disclose our hypocrisy by many infallible proofs. One thing is most indisputably true, that he whose hope in God, does not hold him fast to truth and integrity, who sacrifices a good conscience to popular favor, and sells Christ to his enemies for thirty pieces of silver, hath no part or lot in the ministry of the kingdom of heaven. The power of faith is evinced in its victory over the world, and unbelief shows

itself in its servile subjection to the fear of man and the love of this present evil world. A crucified Christ can be preached by a faithful and a true witness only in a garment of sackcloth; and he only will put it on and wear it, who has by the cross of Christ been crucified to the world and the world to him. If you wear the rough garment to deceive, and whilst by your garb and profession you are mortified to the world, you do nevertheless through fear of the crown of thorns, bow down to the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, you may like the monk at Rome win and wear a triple crown. But the rose of Sharon grows on a thorn bush and crowns it. The mystery of Christ is, that the loss of the life saves it. The way of Christ now, is the *via dolorosa*—from Caiaphas to Pilate and from Pilate to the place of skulls. Let us, brethren, go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. Short is the bondage and shame and death of the witnesses of Jesus. After three days and a half cometh the resurrection. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

---

ART. II.—THOUGHTS ON THE FOUNDATION AND EXTENT  
OF MORAL OBLIGATION.

By REV. ISAAC PARSONS.

DIFFERENT views have been given of right and wrong—of moral obligation and of moral distinctions. It is an interesting inquiry to ascertain on what our obligation to love and serve God rests. If it be asked why we are under obligation to love and serve God, it will be replied by one, that our obligation arises from the will of God, and by another that it is founded in a regard to our own happiness, and by a third, that it grows out of the nature and relation of things.

They who speak of the will of God as the foundation of right and wrong, suppose that God's will renders right right, and wrong wrong, and marks out duty and obligations of duty on the part of creatures according to his sovereign pleasure. They who suppose that our obligation arises from a regard to our own happiness, take for granted that such a course of conduct, as God requires of creatures by his

law, is promotive of their highest happiness, and that it is right for a creature to be governed by a supreme regard to his own individual happiness in all his conduct. It is not probable, however, that any who take this view of the subject would admit the consequences, which to us seem to follow from it.

The fact, that our happiness is to be sought in a course of obedience to the known will of God, does not prove that it is right for us to be influenced by a supreme regard to our happiness in such a course. Nor is it in the nature of the case, possible for us to comply with the will of God, and retain a supreme regard to our own happiness. God's will enforces his claim to our supreme regard, and his law, which is his revealed will, requires our supreme affection to be placed on him, and our own interests and happiness to be subordinate. A supreme regard to our own happiness, if indulged and acted from, will subvert moral obligation as enforced by the law of God and produce insubordination to his law to the same extent in which it is acted from. Individual happiness, however, is not overlooked in moral obligation, and at the same time, it is not the final end, which the creature has to keep in view, or for which he is to feel himself bound to love and serve God. As to the will of God, are we to regard this as the foundation of our obligation to love and serve God? The law of God is the rule of duty to man. But the question is, whether the law is an arbitrary rule, which might have been different, and which if different, would have rendered sin and holiness different in their nature and character; and whether the law of God is adopted in view of its foreseen utility, or because it is right and fit in the nature of the case? Does God require love and service of man to the extent of capacity and powers given to man because it is fit and right, or does his law render this service fit and right? The supposition that the law of God constitutes right and wrong, makes moral good and moral evil to depend on the sovereign will of God. And if the sovereign will of God render a thing right, then the nature of good and evil will depend entirely on his will! Then it was entirely arbitrary whether he should require of his creatures benevolence, or selfishness, or whether he should lay these commands on the intelligent or on the brute creation. And if God should will that a stone or a brute should love him, it would be right for a stone or a brute to love him, and

he might address the same commands to a stone or a brute, which he has addressed to man ! But it is obvious that neither a stone nor a brute could obey such a law and such commands as God has addressed to man, because they have not the faculties requisite to obedience, and if it would be right on the part of God to require such obedience of them, then it would be right for God to require service, which, for want of the requisite faculties, it is absolutely impossible for a creature to perform. The question still returns why does God require this love and service of man ? The obvious answer is, because it is right and fit that man should render him this service. But why is it right and fit that man should render to God his service ? Do you say it is right and fit because God requires it, and then that his law makes it right and fit. But the question is, why does God require it ? If he require it because it is right and fit, then the reason for his law, or the foundation of moral obligation and of right and wrong is laid further back than his revealed will. If God had not revealed his will to man, right and wrong would have been of the same nature as they are now shown to be, and man standing in the same relation to God in which he now stands, would have been under similar obligation to love God, and hence if it is right and fit that man should love God anterior to his revealed law, and if we suppose that God requires this of man in his law, because it is right and fit, then the foundation of law and of right and wrong is not laid in the will of God, but in the nature of things.

By nature of things, I understand the nature and relations of moral beings, including God and his rational creatures. When I place the foundation of right and wrong in the nature of things, I mean, that, in consideration of the perfections of God and the capacities of man—and the relation subsisting between God and man, it is right and fit—and it is seen and felt by man to be right and fit, that man should love, fear and serve God. God is infinitely deserving of this from man—man is capable of rendering this service, and it is therefore fit and right that he should do this, and it is fit and right that God should enforce on man his will, exacting this service of him. In this view of the subject, the law of God is in accordance with the nature of things, and in accordance with the distinction of right and wrong arising from the nature of things.



Will it be said that the nature of things depends on the pleasure of God? It is readily admitted, that the creation of moral agents in their relation to God as creatures, depended on his own pleasure—but we inquire what was the foundation of this pleasure in the Divine Being? Is it not to be traced to the infinite perfection of his own nature?—And is not this perfection also the foundation of the law of God? Can it be supposed, that in view of his own absolute perfection, natural and moral, that God should have revealed a different law as the rule and duty for man? After he had brought man into being—as a creature of his power—dependent on his care—related to him as Creator—could God in view of his own perfections and right to man, have required anything more or less than by his law, than he does require? Could he have revealed a different law? To suppose this, you must admit that he might have changed his own perfections, and of course have been a different being from what he is! But is God uncreated, self-existent, immutable and independent in his existence? You cannot rationally suppose that he is capable of change in his perfections! In his perfections natural and moral, God is to be contemplated as eternally and unchangeably the same. His law founded in the perfections of his nature is immutable, and I may go further and say, that in the nature of the case, it seems to have been impossible that God should have revealed a different law as the rule of duty for creatures.—For ought that appears, God is to be contemplated as under the highest possible moral necessity for revealing himself by his law, precisely as he has revealed himself by his law.—This necessity originated in the unchanging perfection of his nature. I admit that we come to this conclusion from our knowledge of what God has done, and from the nature and operations of his law, we have no other way for ascertaining the perfections of his nature. We can see that what God requires of his rational creatures is right—that it is right that they should be accountable to him, and that their obligation growing out of their relation to him must be commensurate with their capacities and as lasting as their being. We can also see, that in the infinite perfection of his own nature, God has good and unchanging reasons for the claims set forth in his law on his rational creatures.—His will, as expressed in his law, will remain as long as they shall continue to exist. And their obligations of obe-

dience, as enforced by this rule of duty are such as cannot be dissolved! The law of God must stand as long as the nature of things shall stand—sin and holiness—right and wrong as made known by the law of God, will remain eternally the same. God must change in the absolute perfection of his own nature, before his law can be changed, and his relation to man must cease, before man's obligation can cease to love God in fulfilment of his perfect law.

As to the nature and extent of man's obligation, it may be proper to add a few thoughts. Why is this obligation termed moral obligation? We call it moral, because it has respect to man as a voluntary and accountable being; and because it has respect to him also as the subject of moral law, or the law of God; and because he discharges the obligation under the influence of motives, and not under the compulsion of natural force. His capacities as a moral agent, form the limit of this obligation; and the holy law sets forth the claims of God to man's obedience. This obligation implies capacities in man as a moral agent, for doing what God requires of him. Of course, obligation to love God with supreme affection, implies on the part of man all the faculties requisite for the service enjoined. The essential faculties of a moral agent are, understanding, will and conscience. These united in the soul of man, constitute him the subject of moral obligation. The perversion of these will not free him from the obligation; in other words, man's not loving God, in no respect discharges him from the obligation to love him, and it forms no good reason why God should cease to require this of man. Obligation of obedience lies back of all disobedience, and remains under all the disobedience into which man ever falls.

The law of God, in its requirements, reaches to the entire extent of man's capacities. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." This law embraces every thing, which man, as a rational creature, is capacitated to do,—every thing in his feelings, choice, intentions, words and voluntary actions, comes under the cognizance of this law. The law leaves no reserve—no feeling in the mind—no choice—no external privilege—no means of improvement out of the requirement. Man's obligation, as enforced by the law of God, is commensurate with his capacities; and the only way in which his obligation can be

supposed to be impaired, is by impairing some one or more of the essential faculties of his moral agency. When the understanding is deranged, for the time being, man's moral agency may be contemplated as impaired, but in such cases it is not destroyed. Man will exist as a moral agent, so long as God has determined that he shall exist; and in his continued existence, he will remain under obligation to love God in accordance with his law. Disobedience on the part of man forms no release—continued disobedience forms no release from obligation of duty. The finally impenitent will forever remain the subjects of this obligation, and through the everlasting ages of eternity, they will add sin to sin by disregarding this obligation. To throw off moral obligation, is a task to which the sinner is incompetent. No man has power to do away his obligation to be holy. The continued existence of the soul of man, is beyond the power of man to defeat. As a sinner, man may destroy his own happiness but not his being. The human soul is immortal. This will live an intelligent and accountable agent forever and ever, and the command to love God with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, in its import, will be binding on man in every world, and in every state and period of his existence. The fallen angels are not freed from their obligation of obedience to God; and from the nature of the case they never can be, any more than fallen man. So long as the nature and relation of things shall remain, the foundation of moral obligation will stand, and all created moral agents will be bound to love God supremely, and to serve him uninterruptedly.

From the preceding thoughts it follows: 1. That the grace of God, that brings salvation to penitent and believing sinners, in no respect weakens their obligations of obedience. Forgiveness of sin through the atonement of Christ, instead of discharging believers from their obligation, goes to confirm the claims of God's law, and binds them in allegiance to it, as their rule of duty. While they are justified by grace, and in their justified state, freed from condemnation, they are still under law as their rule of duty, and they will be eternally bound by it in their allegiance to God, as holy subjects in his kingdom. It is a wrong view of the Gospel to suppose that believers in Christ are absolved from obligation to be holy, and that they may continue in sin that grace might abound in their salvation. The sins of believers are as odious as the sins of the impenitent; and believ-

ers and unbelievers are under the same obligations to obey the holy law of God. The supposition, that believers are freed from their obligation to obey God, goes to destroy all moral obligation—for remove the believer from his obligation to obey the divine law, you free him from all obligation as a moral being, either to God or fellow his beings. You have no rule left by which his duty can be measured, and you leave him to do what seemeth right in his own eyes. Antinomianism tends to licentiousness in religion and morals, and is the parent of many extravagances and delusions.

2. The subject shows the great evil of sin. Sin is the violation of obligation founded in the nature of things, and it is that for which the sinner can make no amends. Its intrinsic evil is to be estimated by the perfection of the character of God. It is dishonor to him in which the creature refuses to render to God his claims, and in regard to which, the creature is a criminal in his sight. It is true, the creature is finite, yet he stands related to God, who is infinite in all his perfections; and this relation is as unchangeable as God, and as lasting as the creature's being. The crime of violating this obligation is one of intrinsic baseness, whose ill desert is proportioned to the perfection of the Being against whom it is committed. And in annexing the penalty to his law to deter from the commission of this crime, and to express its ill desert according to its malignant nature, it does not appear that God acted arbitrarily, but according to the nature of the case, and established such a penalty as would correspond to the nature of the offence, and be a just expression of his will in view of it. They who regard sin as a small evil, have very imperfect views of man's obligation in his relation to God, as well as of the claims of God upon man. Sin, as a crime, can never literally be blotted out—it may be forgiven, yet not charged in its nature—it will remain a truth to all eternity in the history of redeemed sinners, that they have sinned, and that they deserved to die.

3. It follows that the endless punishment of the wicked will be just. Sin, from the nature of the case, cannot become obsolete, nor cease to be, as pertaining to the character of sinners. That punishment, which is to show the displeasure of God against sin, for ought that appears, must be continued, as threatened in the law, when expressed in retributive justice, as long as sinners, who are its subjects, shall exist. The continued ill desert of unpardoned sin,

will, for aught that appears, render it just in God to inflict endless punishment on all the finally impenitent. Unless it can be shown, that punishment shall change the nature of sin, and in that way remove the sinner's ill-desert, so that he may be released as an act of justice, I see no way to avoid the conclusion, that endless punishment must be certain, because nothing less will manifest the righteousness of God towards this class of moral beings in a state of retribution.

4. There is no salvation to a single sinner, but of grace. In no conceivable way can a moral being, who has violated his duty to God, restore himself to the state of an holy subject. Every sinner has fallen under the penalty of the holy law of God ! Does a sinner see his crime, and is he humbled before God in repentance for it ?—his repentance has no efficacy as a righteousness, in releasing him from the penalty of the law. Does the sinner return to sinless obedience ?—he does no more than perform present duty—he makes no atonement for past crimes. Does he suffer punishment for a limited period ?—the penalty of the violated law will be barely satisfied during this period—it will afterward hold him as a debtor before God. Take whatever view you please of a sinner, and rescue him from deserved wrath—that rescue will be of grace to him. The Gospel makes known the grace of God for the salvation of sinners, and it is the only way of salvation ; and the grace of God in this way of salvation, is wondrously displayed, while his law is magnified and honored, and the moral distinctions of his kingdom maintained !

---

### ART. III. THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

By REV. ANDREW GOVAN, Kingston, N. H.

THE events which occur in the history of England during the seventeenth century, do not yield, either in interest or importance, to those of any other period in the annals of that distinguished country. The extension of commerce and navigation, planting of foreign colonies, the improvements in science, literature, politics and government, during

that century, have done more to promote the increase of human liberty and happiness in the world, than the events of any other period contained in the story of that nation. But let it not be forgotten, that though the above causes have given birth to many important events, yet that the improvements during that period, in religion and the science of theology, (though overlooked by the inconsiderate,) have, in fact, been followed by consequences the most astonishing that were ever known, either in the history of the world or of the church of God.

At the time when Charles I. ascended the throne of England, a contest which had existed during several preceding reigns, respecting the prerogative of the crown and the religious liberty of the people, was about to terminate. Though the chief blame in this controversy, belongs to the predecessors of Charles I., yet the whole weight of the punishment due to them, fell without mitigation or mercy on the devoted head of this unfortunate prince. With his fall, the whole fabric of church and state became one promiscuous heap of ruins. The strife which had so long existed, in attempting to rivet the shackles of the Romish superstition upon the English nation—to bind the burden of religious ceremonies with the strong power of the state, on the necks of the people, now ceased, and thus left the nation at liberty to settle and appoint a system of religion better adapted to suit their own judgment, and more agreeable to the direction of the word of God.

At the crisis when the light of Protestant reformation in Europe began to dawn on the British nation, by means of Tindal's translation of the New Testament—the preaching of the first English reformers—the dissolution of the monasteries, and the breaking up of the connection which had so long subsisted between Rome and England—the dark night of ignorance and superstition, which had so long held its sway during the dominion of Papal authority in the British Isles, now began to approach its termination. Now perhaps it was beyond the wisdom of man to stop the progress of truth, or the power of Satan to conceal the rays of Luther's light, "which sprang from Henry's lawless bed." Previous to this, the people who had long been accustomed to receive every command of the Church without hesitation or dispute, on the principle of implicit obedience, would not now submit to ecclesiastical authority, but opposed it in many in-



stances, even to blood—so that many who formerly would swallow a camel, now became so faithless as to strain at a gnat. The proper guidance of conscience—a due deference and submission to the judgment of others—and the danger of following immediate and strong impulses of feeling, instead of the sure and deliberate counsels of that watchful monitor, it is to be feared, did not, in many instances, possess a proper place in the new order of things.

The era of the invention of printing in Europe, may be properly considered as the period from which we may date the commencement of this moral convulsion, especially among the puritan party of that time. From that cause the whole civilized world received an impulse, which was soon felt nearly at all points, from the centre to the circumference. The art of printing and the dissemination of the Scriptures, connected with the remarkable degree of personal zeal, activity and enterprise of that age, all, no doubt, greatly conspired to carry forward that mighty moral revolution, which was then advancing in the land of our fathers. Nor was this convulsion in the moral world checked in its course, but overcame every obstacle, and continued to advance with resistless force, for many succeeding years. In this surprising period of the history of England, the Puritans held no mean place; but showed then, by the ground which they assumed and the part which they acted, that they were a people destined by divine Providence to accomplish important purposes at a future period, both in the world and in the church. The almost miraculous acquisitions in every department of human learning—the wonderful developement of the human understanding—the convulsive changes both political and religious, at home and abroad, all bear ample testimony to the importance and the extent of the influence of these surprising changes. The puritans shared in the general influence communicated to all ranks by the operation of these causes. When their minds were once awakened, their genius was discovered, by their contempt of ease, great mental and bodily exertions, unabating ardor for new discoveries, and above all, by their untiring activity in extending these discoveries abroad—by personal conversation, by the press, but more particularly by the pulpit, in the labors of which they knew no limits.

To this complicated and powerful moral revolution in England, most of its monarchs from Henry VIII. down-



wards with the greater number of the court bishops, had made constant, but almost unavailing opposition. The reformation had indeed commenced in the reign of Henry VIII., and the yoke of Rome was laid aside; but the cause of civil and religious liberty certainly retrograded during some part of this period. This king, in the exercise of the prerogative, attempted to strip the people of what little remains of liberty the Pope thought it unnecessary to deprive them. So much so, that he made it law, that "nothing shall be taught or maintained (in religion) contrary to the king's instructions. If any spiritual person shall be convicted of preaching any thing contrary to the king's instructions, already made or hereafter to be made, he shall, for the first offence recant, for the second bear a fagot, and for the third be burnt. The Bible shall not be read in English in any church. No women, or artificers, apprentices, journeymen, serving men, husbandmen or laborers, shall read the New Testament in English." Nothing surely, could be more arbitrary or inconsistent with the spirit of religion and liberty, than is here manifested; nor could any thing be more opposed to the advancement of light and knowledge. Still there is good reason to believe that even with these obstacles in the way, that the work of the reformation, in several important particulars, advanced notwithstanding; as it clearly did in the succeeding reigns of Edward VI., Queen Elizabeth, and of James I.

By a criminal overstretch of the prerogative of the crown, and other imprudences, James the First prepared the way for many of the misfortunes of his son and successor, and so involved the nation by means of the Catholic party, and the undue authority and fanatical zeal of that insatiable tyrant and persecutor, Archbishop Laud, that to terminate the contest, recourse was had to the sword, and all the numerous and nameless evils of a civil war. The civil power now passed into the hands of new masters. The nation, with the consent of Parliament, assumed the form of a Commonwealth, and the government was executed by a class of men who styled themselves republicans. Great confusion prevailed for some time, in the affairs both of the Church and State, which rendered it necessary, for the good of the country, that exertions should be made to remove existing evils, and to endeavor to reduce the affairs of the nation, to some settled form and order, with all convenient

despatch. The House of Commons, proceeded to direct their attention to the state of the Church. They commenced, by appointing several committees to inquire into the standing and character of the Clergy. This inquiry was to be made, in reference to the following points, viz: 1. Scandalous immoralities of life. 2. False doctrine, Popish and Arminian. 3. Profanation of the Sabbath, by reading and countenancing the book of sports. 4. Practicing and pressing late innovations. 5. Neglecting their cures, by not preaching, according to their duty. And 6. By disaffection to the Parliamentary government. Rev. Richard Baxter, who was well acquainted with the proceedings of this Committee, in reference to these points, and the action of the Commonwealth Government thereon, remarks:—"That when the Parliament purged the ministry, they cast out the grosser sort of insufficient and scandalous ones, and also some few civil men, who had assisted in the wars against the Parliament, or set up bowing to altars, and such innovations—but they left in, near one half of the ministers that were not good enough to do much service, nor bad enough to be utterly intolerable." The Parliament, after making proper inquiry into these things, and in view of the whole affairs of the nation, which then appeared greatly discouraging—as rulers, who had the fear of God in their hearts, many of them being men of piety, they proceeded to appoint several seasons of special fasting and prayer. The public observance of the Sabbath, next became a subject of Parliamentary consideration. And next, they entered on the duty of framing several regulations, designed to remove all monuments of superstition from the churches. These consisted of crosses, images, pictures of the persons of the Trinity, and of the Virgin Mary—with all popish and superstitious inscriptions, things which were inconsistent with the pure spiritual worship of God, and tending to lead the human mind to idolatry.

Such then, was the state of things, and the nature of some of those causes, which led our ancestors to the solemn duty of calling together the Westminster Assembly of Divines. This is an event in history, in its nature and consequences, which, perhaps, eternity itself is necessary to unfold. The character of the age, the bitterness of party zeal, on all sides, have necessarily raised objections in the minds of many, calculated to produce unfavorable impressions, both with

respect to the characters of the members of that venerable Assembly, and of the value of those labors for the Church of God, which they have so faithfully and ably executed.—The Assembly was neither a Convocation, according to the Episcopal method, nor a Synod, according to the Presbyterian plan; but, the Counsel of the nation chose them, purely for the sake of consulting them, and to obtain their views respecting the settlement of the Doctrine, Worship, and Order of the Church. The Ordinance, by which this body was called together, is entitled:—"An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons in Parliament, for the calling an Assembly of learned and godly divines and others, to be consulted with by the Parliament for settling the government, and liturgy of the Church of England, and for vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the Church, from false aspersions, and interpretations." The Assembly, convened in Henry the VII. Chapel, Westminster, England, on the 1st July, 1643, when sixty-nine members appeared the first day, according to summons.

Whatever objections may have been urged by some, against the moral, literary, or religious character of the members of the Westminster Assembly, it certainly appears, that the testimony of the most credible evidence is decidedly in their favor. Mr. Baxter, who lived contemporaneous with the members, was personally acquainted with many of them, consequently he was able to form a correct opinion of their qualifications. Accordingly he says:—"That they were men of eminent learning, godliness, ministerial abilities, and fidelity. That as far as I am able to judge, by the information of all history of that kind, and by many other evidences left us, the christian world since the days of the apostles, had never a Synod of more excellent Divines, than this and the Synod of Dort." And a late judicious author says:—"Baxter knew the members better than Milton or Clarendon did, and was better qualified to judge their motives, and appreciate their doings. The persons who composed the Assembly, were generally men of approved christian character and abilities, and several of them distinguished for learning. But both the men and their doings, have been too highly extolled by some, and too much undervalued by others." The different orders of religion in the Assembly, were chiefly four. The Presbyterians were confessedly the most numerous. They con-

sisted of a class of aged, grave, pious, and sound ministers, with many hopeful young men in the ministry, and many advanced, sober minded christians, alike averse to sectarianism and persecution. They appear, from principle, to have been decidedly attached to the doctrines of Calvin, and in favor of an alliance with the Church of Scotland—and of establishing Presbyterian uniformity throughout the kingdom. They were supported by Essex, Manchester and Northumberland, among the nobility—and by the body of the London Clergy, and the majority of professing christians in the metropolis, together with many persons of high standing in the army. The leaders of the Presbyterian interest, in the Westminster Assembly, were Drs. Calamy, Twiss, and Messrs. White, Palmer, Marshall and the Scottish commissioners; and in the House of Commons, Messrs. Hollis, Glyn, Maynard, Clement, Walker, and William Prynne.

The Independents, in the Assembly, history informs us, never at any time exceeded the number of ten or twelve members; of these, Goodwin, Nye, Burroughs, Simpson and Bridge, were the most conspicuous; they ranked with a number of the most distinguished in the body, for learning, talents, and address. The Erastian party consisted chiefly of lay men, who were mostly of the profession of the law, and who were well acquainted with the forms of civil government. Of this class were Selden and Whitelocke, men of profound talents and learning. Lightfoot and Coleman, were greatly distinguished for their Rabbinical knowledge, equally so, as the two former in the knowledge of their profession. The Assembly, when taken together and acting as a body, possessed as much talent and piety, and were as capable of performing the duties for which they were convened, and to as great advantage, as any equal number of divines, who ever assembled in an ecclesiastical capacity, in any age of the Church, since the close of the sacred canon. Of Selden, his biographer informs us, that he was a decided christian. In private life he was universally esteemed for his benevolent feeling, and urbanity of manners, and that as a scholar, he must be ranked one of the most learned men of his day. From the accounts given us, respecting Dr. Lightfoot, by all writers who have referred to his character, as well as by the amazing erudition discovered in his published works, it fully appears, that he was a

man of genuine piety, and a biblical scholar and a divine of the very first order.

There are some christians, in our times of religious liberty and prosperity in the Church, who affect to despise the piety and the orthodoxy of the age of Castles, the Star Chamber, and of religious persecution. But, if we compare the complicated labors, the self-denying patience and perseverance, together with the pure scriptural system of doctrine, of the Calamy's, Howe's, Owen's, and Baxter's, with those of the men and measures of more recent date; it is true, we shall find at present, much minute acquaintance with German criticism and metaphysics—but we shall look in vain, for that depth of research into the hidden treasures of scripture truth, and above all for that enlightened, holy and deep toned piety, by which the men of the former period were so eminently distinguished. In the present age, we find some, who are possessed of an interesting, exciting, and popular style of address, and of a polished, clear, and argumentative method of composition. But the point in question is, do they give evidence that they have studied in the school of Christ, with a right spirit, all those simple and obvious points of the system of christian doctrine, which the Bible so plainly reveals? We fear that sufficient evidence of this, does not exist. Whereas, Dr. Owen, with a dignity of manner for which he was eminently characterized, and with all his vast learning, has upon the authority of inspiration, and with the humility of a little child, embraced all the great leading doctrines of revelation; and has rationally explained and defended these with an intellectual vigor and success, to which it would be impossible to find a parallel, among the numerous race of authors of the present day. It is true, that there was not a perfect unanimity, on all the topics of revealed truth, among the divines of that period, any more than there is at the present day, but though the doctrinal sentiments of the members of the Westminster Assembly, on all points, did not amount to what might be termed perfect harmony—nevertheless, they agreed in the great lines of doctrine, as held by Calvin, and the English Reformers. This is rendered evident by the fact, that the first step taken by the Assembly as a body, was to consider some amendments to be made in the doctrinal articles of the Church of England, with a view of rendering their sense more express and de-

terminate in favor of Calvinism. By comparing the articles of the Church of England, on original sin and free will, with those as amended by the Assembly, the strict orthodoxy of the latter will evidently appear.

As it is the principal design, in what follows of this article, to present to the reader some considerations, respecting that portion of the labors of the Assembly, which appears in the constitution of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, which consists of a Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, with a Directory for public worship, and the plan of government and disciplines, we shall now take some notice of the first of these, namely:—"The Confession of Faith." To settle the doctrines of the Church, was one of the chief objects for which the Assembly was called, and to frame something of the nature of an Ecclesiastical Constitution, consistent with the letter and spirit of the sacred oracles. The Confession, as drawn with these views, by this body, passed both the Assembly and Parliament, by very large majorities. And though it may be charged with some imperfections, yet by the ablest judges, it has generally been ranked among the most perfect bodies of Divinity, that have appeared upon the Anti-Armenian and Calvinistic principles, during the seventeenth century. As a system of comparative theology, it will most probably continue to rank still higher and higher, in proportion as the Church advances in piety and holiness—and though in the existing state of religion, in the present outbreking of error and fanaticism in the world, some most important points contained in it, are warmly contested, yet we make no doubt but that long before the end of time, during the millennial state of the Church, all christians will unite in one judgment, respecting the great Calvinistic doctrines contained in this Confession.

The use of articles of faith, in the Christian Church, has long been greatly opposed; nevertheless in every period of her existence, they have been considered both necessary and useful. The prejudices of some men of taste and science, have been offended by this seeming abridgement of their moral liberty. Desirous of revelling in the riches of intellect, to enjoy the pleasures communicated by the power of genius, they experience an unnatural descent, when required to receive the special points of *truth concentrated*, as these are revealed in the Christian faith. They can enjoy satisfaction in beholding what is sublime and beautiful



in nature—nay, even weep with what is pathetic; but the humble and commanding truths that appeal to the conscience when placed before the minds of the elegant literati, as well as before illiterate peasants, meet with a sure repulse in the depravity of their common nature. While such truths require the christian to relinquish all dependence on his own goodness, and with this self denial, connect the strongest obligations to benevolence, piety and devotion, such truths are at once too holy and humbling to the pride and passions of the unsubdued mind, and the religion of Christ, is still to the children of this world, foolishness. But the principal object of the articles of faith, is to act as a barrier, in the way of admission to the Church, of those who are secret enemies. If articles of faith are formed, will they not have a tendency to check and to limit inquiry, and in a way inconsistent with the means and opportunities of men who are differently circumstanced in life? It is replied, that in heaven there will be an equal diversity in the capacity, as well as of the channels and means of communicating truth and happiness to all those who shall dwell there—nevertheless, the whole company of the redeemed, shall be of one mind, and of one heart.

The increase of doctrinal errors, and the unfailing assiduity of the Church's enemies, to corrupt the truth by introducing heresy, have compelled her to resort to the painful necessity of opposing the disingenuous artifices of her adversaries, by a complete and guarded announcement of the principal articles of her faith. The men who are most strenuously opposed to the numerous articles of faith, are, it is certain, those very individuals, who have rendered it indispensably necessary to employ this security, of which they so much complain. We must raise our ramparts, and increase our guards, as the enemy does his—we must either encounter the adversary on equal terms, and so secure the field, and gain the victory on our side, otherwise we shall be overcome, truth be trodden under foot, and the cause of God and righteousness perish from the earth.

The Confession, as drawn up, and passed by the Assembly, was signed by the Prolocutor (Moderator,) and by the Scribes; but the subscription of the members was not required, nor could this have been obtained, for the following reasons. The Confession itself, which determines so many obtruse points in Theology, though it received nearly the



unanimous consent of the body, and though the members of a convention called together by a political body, were almost wholly in sentiment, orthodox, a few, we find, were disposed to dissent from the body, on some points. Accordingly, it appears that several members entered their dissent against some expressions respecting reprobation—the imputation of the active and passive obedience of Christ, &c.

The views which have been generally entertained, on the subject of the subscription of articles of faith in the Church, by the ministers of the Gospel have been various. Some have been induced to subscribe the articles of faith, as the means of promoting peace, in direct opposition to the very end for which they were designed, namely: for avoiding diversity of opinions. Others have invented new significations, by which to explain the language and the terms, directly at variance with the views and meaning of the original compilers.

The source from which the articles of the Westminster Confession of Faith, professes to have been taken, was the Holy Scriptures—hence as a standard of the truths of the Christian Church, it is to be considered as containing a summary view of the principal leading doctrines contained in the Bible. On this account, many have made free with the standards of the Church, supposing that if they received the views of the inspired writers in the true and proper acceptation, it made no difference whether the articles of faith to which they subscribed, were understood in their plain and obvious signification, provided only, they were received “for substance of doctrine.” In the same manner as a man would look upon a system of Logic, Chemistry, or Botany, as merely containing an arrangement of the leading facts known, respecting each of these subjects; but in speaking of each of which systems, he meant nothing more after all, than as one of these might by name be distinguished from the other. With these views of the subject and of what constitutes a system, many suppose that they hold the great leading articles of the standards of the Church, and meanwhile, they think they have a right to differ from others *on some unimportant points*, as to the modes of EXPLANATION. Thus it was believed, both by the disciples of Christ and by the Jews, that Jesus Christ cast out devils. But by the former party, (the disciples,) it was asserted that it was done by the finger of God; whereas by the latter (by

the Jews) it was maintained, that Christ cast out the devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. By means of what some style the philosophy of religion, they suppose that they may, with propriety, illustrate and defend those doctrines, in which they agree with the standards in the obvious sense, in which they are expressed by these, while in respect to the truths about which they differ in sentiment from these, they assume the right of employing such theories for explaining, and such arguments for defending them, as are most agreeable to their own views. The language of the standards of the Presbyterian Church, respecting the present moral condition of the impenitent, is the following, viz:—"Man by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will, to any spiritual good, accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from what is good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereto." But alas! what becomes of the sentiment contained in this article, in the estimation of many ministers who subscribe to the standards of the Presbyterian Church, who nevertheless believe, that conversion depends on the act of will in the agent, and despite of the above article, that the sinner is still possessed of all the power necessary to convert himself—and who teach not only that every man may convert himself, but that it is "as easy for him to do so as to walk;" and that he has only to "put forth two simple exercises, faith and repentance, and it is done." Such is a sample of the nature and result of the system in use with many, not unaptly termed the philosophy of religion.

Accordingly, many persons holding opposite views of doctrine, may nevertheless unite in subscribing the same formulary—provided only, that the parties are allowed liberty to explain the respective articles in the sense in which they understand them. For instance, if we inquire whether a Calvinist and a Socinian can be brought so nearly together, in sentiment apparently, respecting the doctrine of man's alienation from God and depravity of nature, we shall find but little difficulty on this principle. A single example will place this subject in a clear light. Mr. Neal, in his history of the Puritans, refers to a circumstance in the reign of Queen Mary, respecting a number of religious fanatics, who were thrown into prison together. They acted in such a manner, as to render it necessary for the warden of the

prison, at length to separate them, on account of their violent conduct and perpetual quarreling among themselves. "I mention these disputes," says the author, "to show the frailty and corruption of human nature." Dr. Toulmin, a Socinian, and Editor of the latest edition of this work, in a note, remarks on this. "But how did they indicate the corruption of human nature? That betrays itself in the intemperate spirit and language with which they are managed—and should be imputed, not to human nature, but to THE WANT OF SELF GOVERNMENT, in those individuals who thus offend." The depravity of the individuals referred to, according to Mr. Neal, was the cause of the conduct objected to—while the want of self government, according to Dr. Toulmin, was the only principle from which it arose. The essential wickedness of the conduct of these prisoners, by the former theory, arose from a state of nature; according to the latter, from a single act of the mind, but referable to no adequate preceding cause. Both agree, so far as to admit that the persons in question, by their conduct gave evidence of the operation of some cause, which influenced them to conduct in a manner at variance with the principles of moral rectitude—but the one asserts and the other denies innate depravity of heart as the cause of external transgressions. With certain methods of explanation, both individuals might be prepared to subscribe some formulary, respecting the doctrine of depravity. But, would it be esteemed consistent with the principles either of reason or religion, for those who differ materially respecting this and other great doctrines contained in the standards of the Church, to subscribe on such inconsistent grounds? In this manner, and with the aid of mental reservations and other shifts and modes of explanation, there would be little difficulty to prevent any one to subscribe the Alcoran, or the articles of the Council of Trent. By such measures, creeds and confessions would be rendered nugatory and useless, nor would there be any possible means of distinguishing truth from error, or of perceiving the separating line between one body of christians and another. Now the experience of the Church, in all past ages, proves that articles of faith, are both necessary and useful. But every undesigning, honest christian will shudder with abhorrence, at the very idea that any one, especially a christian minister should subscribe a creed, in which he does not firmly believe.

The history of the church itself satisfactorily proves, and the testimony of scripture as plainly attests the fact, namely : that a proper basis of christian union can in no respect be secured so well by any other means as by that now under consideration. The apostles and first ministers of Christ, in the whole of their writings which have come down to us, exhibit a perfect harmony of doctrinal sentiment, "in the form of sound words," which they have left on record, and which they have so strongly recommended to the attention of all the followers of Christ. "I besought thee that thou mightest charge some, that they teach no other doctrine." "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." We are bound to encourage and support the religious labors and ministrations of teachers of sound Gospel principles ; but if we encourage the dissemination of fatal error, we do it at the imminent risk of our own souls. So that it is not only the interest of the church, but also the duty and privilege of all christians to maintain the truth, if they would promote unity and harmony in the religious body to which they belong, together with the prosperity of the cause of Jesus Christ. By meekly and steadfastly maintaining the truth, the christian employs the most effectual means for extending the cause of God and true religion. Whereas by encouraging error, he lays the surest foundation for a division of feeling, and the triumph of sin. In the truth there is unity and the power of attraction ; whereas in its opposite, there exists the most fruitful source of repulsion, of division, and of eternal death.

The substance of the Westminster Assemblies' Confession of Faith, consisting of the regular series of doctrines which it contains, that body afterwards proceeded to reduce to the form of Catechisms, the larger and the shorter. The former was intended to serve the purpose of a concise body of divinity, for the use of ministers to lecture from in the pulpit, after the manner of the foreign Protestant churches, according to the custom of those times. The shorter catechism contains a very accurate summary of the doctrines designed for the use of children and youth. Of the excellence and usefulness of the shorter catechism, it is only necessary to say, that the religious community have long ago placed upon it the seal of their approbation. It has, indeed, been thought by some to be a little too long in a few partic-

ulars ; and by others rather abstruse for the capacity of children. The same objections, if they were of any weight, might with equal propriety be urged against the scriptures, or any other books commonly in use in the education of youth. The catechism itself may be justly affirmed to be altogether unequalled in the English language, for clearness of thought, as containing much within small limits, as treating the most important and richest truths of divine revelation guardedly and with the strictest accuracy, and in perfect accordance with the analogy of scripture. Indeed, this production has been ranked among the choicest order of theological literature of this or any other age. Its reputation is yet destined to rise, and its merit to secure a much higher place in the attention and admiration of the church, at no very distant period. How many at the present day speak of the poems of Homer, and of the classical writings of Greece and Rome, with unmeasured applause ; and how long has this enchantment swayed the reason and imaginations of hundreds and of thousands in the world, and during the ages and generations of those who are now reposing amid the clods of the valley ? But what is the intrinsic value of the whole world of classic literature, when put into the balance with the doctrines taught in the pages of the shorter catechism ?

To facilitate the early religious instruction of children, is certainly an object of no small importance at the present day. This subject the Westminster Assembly had particularly in view, when they compiled the shorter catechism. They assumed it as a maxim, that the reality and superior excellence of the Christian system, connected with the divine authority of its founder, involved the strongest obligation on christians, to instruct all those who are committed to their charge. One reason that ought to bring this subject home to the consciences of parents, guardians and instructors, consists in this : that knowledge respecting the subject of religion, above every other branch of study, ought to be early commenced, and steadily pursued. In this particular, like almost every other, human nature is as much under the control of custom as of conviction ; and it is an undoubted truth, that unless religious knowledge is communicated to the mind in childhood or in early youth, it will not often be taught with sufficient authority to secure the impression.

In Scotland, the doctrine and duties of religion occupy a prominent place in the primary school system of education. In that country, we do not yet find that infant school libraries, crowded with illustrations of French philosophy, and infidel philanthropy, have taken the place of the Bible and of the Catechism. And it were much to be desired, that the latter sentiment could be affirmed of all our schools and seminaries in this interesting and highly favored land of the pilgrims.

The form of government and discipline of the Christian Church, has, at various periods of ecclesiastical history, been a subject of much interest and discussion. Another leading object, on account of which the Westminster Assembly was called, was to prepare a scriptural form of church government, for the consideration of Parliament. This was an object of paramount importance at that period, on account of the old form of episcopal government having been already dissolved, and no other system as yet appointed in its place. Respecting the subject of church government, the independent party in the Assembly agreed with the Presbyterians so far as to admit that there was a particular form of Church order distinctly presented in the New Testament, which was of divine appointment; but on the questions what that form of government really was, and whether it was obligatory in every period subsequent to that of the apostles and the first Christian Church, the parties could not agree. The question for discussion was the following: "Does the scripture show that many particular congregations may and ought, by divine institution, to be under the authority and direction of one Presbyterial government?" The discussion in the Assembly, on this question, continued for thirty days; the Erastian party did not object to the Presbyterian form of church government, as a political institution, suitable to be maintained by the civil magistrate, but to any claim to a divine right, they strenuously objected. The Independents also opposed the question on the claim of a divine right in favor of Presbytery, and presented a claim for a divine right in support of their own system of Church order (Congregationalism,) they employed no less than fifteen days in this discussion, in opposing the Presbyterian scheme, and fifteen days more in defending their own method of Church order.

As a key to the question thus under consideration, the



principal inquiries were directed to ascertain the nature of the Constitution of the first Church at Jerusalem—the subordination of Synods and ruling elders. On the first of these points, the Independents affirmed, that the first Church at Jerusalem was at no time more numerous than to admit of their meeting altogether in a body in the same place. In establishing this proposition, reference was made by them, to a variety of passages in the New Testament; particularly to Acts i. 15: “The whole number of disciples, being about one hundred and twenty, met together with one accord.” And Acts ii. 1: “They were all with one accord in one place.” When they had increased to three thousand, it is still said, “they met altogether with one accord in one place.” Acts ii. 46. When they were still farther increased in numbers, “multitudes being added to them, both of men and women, they still met together with one accord in one place;” Acts v. 12, 14. After the believers had increased by still farther additions, that it became requisite to appoint Deacons, to regulate and manage the concerns of the poor, they elected several men from among themselves, and set them before the apostles. Acts xv. 4, 22: “Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole Church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch.” The Independents indeed admitted, that there is reference made in scripture, to a Presbytery; but then it was no more, but the Presbytery of the elders of one particular church or congregation, as inspiration no where even hints, that a distinct order of Presbyteries, such as Sessions, Consistories, Synods, were placed in the Church. They finally objected to the high power claimed by the Presbyterian order, as the authority of admitting or excluding members, connected with the infliction of penalties, because for these they could perceive no sanction in scripture, besides they regarded it as a manifest infringement on the rights and authority of the civil magistrate.

To these arguments in favor of Congregational Church government, the Presbyterian party, in reply, made answer in substance as follows:

In reference to the power supposed to be vested in the church collectively; and not as Presbyterians suppose, in the hands of officers of the Church, it was remarked: That in civil society, the community are before the rulers; but in ecclesiastical matters, the officers were before the so-



ciety; hence that no reasoning in the one case, can with any weight apply to the other. The Saviour commissioned his apostles before any Christian Church was formed; and they were chosen as the first ministers of his kingdom, invested with power to preach, to dispense ordinances, and to exercise discipline over his professed followers. They were appointed the first in succession of an order, which was to continue to the end of time: "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." In further proof of this view of the subject, and in reference to the power of the people to conduct Church affairs, they alledged the words of Christ: "If thy brother trespass against thee," &c., "and if he neglect them, tell it to the Church." These words, it was contended, were spoken before any Christian Church was organized, of course that the reference here made by Christ to the Church, referred to the Jewish Synagogue, the formation of which bore a very near resemblance to a Presbyterian congregation. The Synagogue consisted of two orders of persons—the people who met together for religious instruction, to hear the law read and explained; and the rulers who conducted the exercises in this assembly. The duties of these rulers consisted in teaching and governing, directing the proceedings of the Synagogue, taking care of the poor, and judging and excommunicating offenders. "Tell it," says Christ, "to the Church," in the manner in which such matters are told to the Synagogue, namely—bring a complaint to the officers of the Christian Church, in the same manner in which the Jews are accustomed to complain to the rulers of the Jewish Synagogue, that they may labor with the offending brother, and excommunicate him if he does not repent.

In reference to the Church at Jerusalem, it was contended, in opposition to the Congregationalists, that the number of the disciples was so great at Jerusalem, that they must have formed several distinct Societies or Congregations. Hence the probability that each of these had their own separate, ruling and teaching officers. We read that on the day of Pentecost, "three thousand were converted, and added to the Church." Again we read, Acts iv. 4, "Many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of them was about five thousand." And again, Acts xxi. 20, "Thou seest brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe;" in the original language, *ποσαι μυριαδες*, how many

myriads, or tens of thousands. Now in order to establish Independency, it is not necessary to show, that the success and extension of the Gospel was great, but that it was small; and at any rate, to prove how it was practicable for multitudes such as these just referred to in the above cited passages, were capable of assembling in one place; and if it be supposed that they might meet altogether, in the temple, it would still be requisite to explain how the Jewish rulers had become so far reconciled to the followers of Christ, as to permit them to meet for worship, and for dispensing the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in the Temple, a place over which they possessed unlimited control. And further, it is necessary for us to reflect, that the probable increase of the disciples, and the number of congregations in Jerusalem, were the principal reasons why there were so many religious teachers constantly employed in that place; for upon any other supposition, if there was no more than one society, in which all the disciples regularly assembled together for the public worship of God, it cannot be conjectured how the various teachers could have any opportunity to improve their gifts. It is generally admitted that all the apostles continued in the city for a considerable time after the Church at Jerusalem was formed. With them were united prophets, inspired men, who predicted things future, and who possessed supernatural aid to enable them to explain the prophecies of the Old Testament. We read also of elders or presbyters of the Church, who were ordinary teachers and ministers of the word. From these views, therefore, respecting the multitude of the disciples, and the number and variety of religious teachers, the conclusion was deduced that there was a number of different Christian congregations at Jerusalem, all under the direction of one Presbyterial form of Church government.

In order still further to establish and illustrate the nature of Church government, as represented in the scripture, reference is made to the subject of appeal, with a view to confirm the evidence already adduced. In a passage in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, it is stated that, "Certain persons of Judea, taught the brethren at Antioch, that unless they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved." On this subject a difficulty ensued among the brethren, and indeed the same topic might be the cause of disturbing the peace of the Church in any other city where

the Jews resided. Wisdom, therefore suggested the propriety of endeavoring to obtain a final decision respecting it, in a superior assembly to that of the Church officers at Antioch; from a body, which by its weight of character, would secure both the respect and assent of the Churches throughout the world. The appeal to the Presbyterial government of the Christian Societies at Jerusalem, was the result. Accordingly the apostles, "Paul and Barnabas, with certain others, went up to the apostles and elders about this question. Whether any of the persons composing this delegation were from the Christian societies of the region round Antioch is not certain. Both the apostles and elders of Jerusalem, were addressed by this delegation, manifestly showing that the appeal was not made to persons possessed of inspiration alone; but likewise to those who were not, for the elders were not inspired oracles in the Church. But this appeal was addressed to those only, who composed the Presbyterial government of the several Societies of the Church of Jerusalem. This controversy was submitted to them for decision, and accordingly this body did not, after deliberation, give *advice* merely, but they published a *decree*; so that the term used in the following chapter, and the expression here translated, is the same as is usually applied to represent the authoritative commands of a superior. Therefore this Assembly at Jerusalem, was a Synod; and from the report of its proceedings, which is recorded in the Acts, it was claimed that a Synod had a final authority in ecclesiastical affairs, every where at that period in the world.

Upon the close of this debate in the Assembly, when the proposition was again read, and the votes called for, it was carried by a great majority, "that the scripture holds forth, that many particular congregations may, and by divine institution ought, to be under one presbyterial government." On the subject being carried up, from the Assembly to the House of Commons, and after considerable warmth of discussion on the point of the divine right, of the Presbyterian form of Church government, which was negatived, the following proposition was put by the House, and voted unanimously—"That it is lawful and agreeable to the word of God, that the Church be governed by Congregational, Classical, and Synodical Assemblies." The bill, necessary to constitute the doings of Parliament legal, next became the subject of consideration—and by an enactment, to make

Presbyterianism the established religion of the nation. In proceeding to this, a number of questions came up, by means of which, considerable delay and contention were occasioned. The question respecting the discipline of the Church, and the power of the keys, produced a diversity of opinion in Parliament—the Assembly contended for the right of the Clergy, to control all matters of order and discipline, while the Parliament insisted that it ought to be in the power of the civil magistrate. The Independents claimed a similar power in the discipline of the Church, for the brethren of each particular Congregation, but without any civil penalties connected. And further, an effort was made, to include the Independent party within the new order of Church government about to be established. They were inclined to make some compromise, on the points of difference between themselves and the Presbyterians, while the subject of Church discipline was under consideration in the Assembly. But now the Presbyterians urged that the new form of government might pass into a law, before the exceptions of the Independents could be considered. That controversy terminated, and we regret to say, that the issue was such, that neither accommodation, nor even toleration could be agreed on between the parties.

The only remaining topic to which we shall advert, in the proceedings of this venerable body, is in reference to the directory for public worship, which was designed to stand in place of the liturgy of the Church of England, now laid aside. In the prefatory remarks, which we find the Assembly have affixed to this valuable portion of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, they have fully stated the reasons which render it necessary for them to prepare a substitute for the liturgy or directory formerly in use. The original compilers of the liturgy of the Episcopal Church, found it necessary at that period to reform many things then in common use in the public service of the Church, with the view to rescue the nation from the vain, superstitious and idolatrous practices which had been so long maintained in the public worship of God. The liturgy was therefore substituted in the place of the Mass, and the rest of the Latin service, and the whole worship was performed in the English language; by which means, the body of the people were both instructed and edified. But the time had now arrived, in which experience showed that the liturgy

used in the Church of England, had become offensive to many, and was no longer necessary. The increase of knowledge and piety, now rendered the reading of prayers in public worship, not only unnecessary but objectionable; it occasioned unnecessary divisions, being contrary to principles of conscience; and as conformity to the practices of the Church of England, was by law required, many zealous and useful ministers could no longer remain in the Church. The manner in which the liturgy of the Church required the communion service to be performed, was also calculated to create unhappy divisions, arising from scruples of conscience. When at the same time, the Papists boasted that the liturgy was a part of their service, and though changed in form, yet in substance, the matter was the same.

On these, and other accounts, the Westminster Assembly affirm, that they considered a still further reformation in the worship and service of the Church, then warranted and called for. The new Directory, though it was not pretended to be a complete form of devotion, yet it contains many directions taken expressly from the word of God, and also from the principles of sound religious experience. The Directory of the Westminster Assembly, points out and gives instructions respecting a variety of topics, connected with the worship of God—on prayer—preaching—on the administration of the ordinance of the Lord's supper—the sanctification of the Christian Sabbath—on the ministerial visitation of the sick—and on public and solemn days of fasting, &c.—leaving ministers at liberty to perform each of these parts of the service, in a manner suited to their own judgment and abilities. The Directory is certainly well worth the perusal and the close attention of every Christian Minister of the present day; indeed we know of no production which gives so clear and comprehensive a view of the manner in which the duties of a minister ought to be performed. He who would become an able and successful ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, let him next to the study of the scripture, on the subject of the pastoral care, also diligently peruse the Directory of the Westminster Assembly.

## ART. IV.—MODERN POPULAR PREACHING.

By REV. RICHARD W. DICKINSON, New-York.

THAT eloquent preachers of the Gospel are few and far between, is a remark not less frequently made with surprise than with regret. Other topics sink in comparison with the theme of the preacher—other interests are absorbed in the momentous end to which the christian ministry is consecrated, and yet, sermons in general, fail even to arrest attention. Surely, it were as reasonable to expect, that there would be as many distinguished orators in the desk, as at the bar.

But, aside from the greater number of members which the latter enrolls, and the regular demands which are hebdomadally made on the former—when we consider how rare the talent of eloquence is, the matter of surprise should be not that we hear so few eloquent sermons, but so many good ones. To give to what is old the grace of novelty; to invest admitted truth with such colors as to affect the imagination and the heart; to confine description to abstract qualities, and yet to influence practical life, is the greatest trial of human skill. It has therefore, been not less strikingly than justly observed, “that it is easier to preach than to plead; but more difficult to preach well, than to plead well.”\*

Heretofore, opinions have coincided as to the difficulty of executing a discourse which was adapted at once to convince and to persuade—in other words, to “preach well;” but now, nothing is generally deemed so facile a task.—Occupying the pulpit, it is only, we had almost said, to energize by voice and manner any thing or nothing, and you are an able and eloquent preacher! According to the style of some, who of late have been regarded by the throng, as the wonders of the ministry, it would seem, that to vociferate, is mental power—to gesture violently, is to preach impressively—to talk at random, is to be practical; or never to vary the subject, however various our texts, is singleness of eye and the *ne plus ultra* of devotedness—that to be vulgar, is to be plain and honest with the souls of men—to be expert at anecdote and dialogue, and fertile in suppositions, is

\* La Bruyere, *De la Chaire*, Tom. 11, p. 217.

to possess a remarkable faculty for illustrating the hidden sense of scripture ; and in other instances, to dogmatize, is to be conclusive—to sophisticate with plausibility, is to reason profoundly.

Once, too, it was thought that no man could be an affecting or successful preacher, who was not at once well educated and truly pious ; now, little more is necessary in certain quarters than that he came from a particular school ; or be, to use the current designation, of the "right stamp."

So, also, in respect to the style of sermons, we were wont to think, that they should be characterized by purity, variety, strength and harmony of composition ; that words should be fitted to their places ; that as the ancients regarded ornament as well as use in the architecture, so in discourses, we were always led to believe, that whatever offended the ear, would not readily gain admittance to the heart. But now, from its rarity among sermonizers, that which, according to Rhetoricians, constitutes a good style, would seem to be unsuitable for the purposes of religious instruction. Every grace, and almost every rule of correct speaking, is sometimes sacrificed to the desire of appearing plain and effective. Instead of being proper words in proper places, the style of some might more correctly be defined to be, improper words in improper places ; and instead of a sermonizer attempting to say all he should, as he should, and nothing more than he should, the approved rule seems to be now, that he should say what he can, how he can, and as much as he can.

The manner of preaching has ever been subject to change, according as some strongly marked preacher has set the example. Hence, there has been the poetic, and the philosophical—the argumentative, and the hortatory—the pathetic and the illustrative. The desire of distinction, rather than the diversity of natural talents, will serve to explain these different modes of presenting the truth. A compliance with popular tastes, or the transient humours of the people, is attended with less difficulty than to rise to eminence in the pulpit by founding one's style of preaching on the general and uniform taste of mankind. Where many may excel, few can be distinguished, and the natural recourse, therefore, of weak but ambitious minds, is found in eccentricity.

But it admits of doubt, whether the style of preaching



which of late years has been so much in demand throughout the limits of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, was ever previously in vogue. Though it repelled the intelligent, shocked the serious, and grieved the thoughtful, yet the apparent success with which it was attended—the celerity with which it professed to break the slumbers of the churches, and the ease with which it effected seeming conversions, soon resolved all disapprobation into religious apathy, or hatred of the truth. The distinction, too, which the author of this mode of preaching—an individual of strong but uncultivated powers, so speedily attained, in connexion with the facility of acquiring his theological vocabulary, his system of rhetoric, and his panacea for moral evil, soon allured other adventurers into the *fallow grounds* of the Church. Thus, imitators increased, the many *longe sequuntur*; but a few, not indistinctly reminding us of their great oracle, except in candor and talent. No one can look back for ten years without perceiving that Mr. Finney has exerted a wide spread influence over both the matter and manner of the sacred desk. Not confined to the ordinary, or to the lower order of intellect in the Ministry, some of our ablest preachers have not escaped the contagion of his example.

In many respects the style of preaching which he introduced, and which is still current in many sections of the Church, strikingly differs from that which previously obtained. If the former had too remote a bearing on the conscience, this is directly calculated to inflame the passions. If the former were too vague, this is too pointed. If the former feared to offend, this courts opposition. The one, perhaps, was too cautious, the other flatters itself on its effrontery. The one might have been in general too elevated, the other is always too low. The one explained Scripture by itself, the other illustrates it by incidents and events. The one assumed the free agency of man as well as the sovereignty of God, the other argues the sinner's responsibility and establishes it at the expense of the divine attributes. The one in many instances, might not have rendered the law sufficiently prominent, the other, in its anxiety to convince of sin, almost always loses sight of the doctrines of grace. The former expected success from God, the latter virtually relies on the speciality of its effort; and if the good old preacher erred in supposing that there were

seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, our modern zealot is surely hardly right in believing that no one but he serves the Lord.

Lest our description of modern popular preaching, should not be immediately recognized, we shall be more explicit; though it may be doubted whether some will prize their portraits however well they may be executed; while their admirers, we fear, may lack the courtesy to thank us for our pains. Such is human nature, that "men suck in opinions as wild asses do the wind, without distinguishing the wholesome from the corrupted air, and then, live upon it at a venture: and when all their confidence is built upon zeal and mistake, yet, therefore, because they are zealous and mistaken, they are impatient of contradiction;"\* at once reluctant to acknowledge their faults and forward to impugn the piety of those who dissent from their course.

The preaching to which we allude is dogmatical. As if he were endowed with the certainty of universal knowledge, nothing is more common than for the preacher to affirm either what the sinner *can* do, or what Almighty God *cannot* do; either the specific form of sin which withholds God's blessing on the Church, or the very sin which has brought his frown on the community; either the reason why the millenium has not already dawned, or the obstacles which must be removed, before the Gospel—"the power of God"—can advance. Are there things in the Scriptures *heard to be understood*? But this is an age of light! Are there gordian knots in theology? We shall save time by cutting them! As if he were invested with supreme authority, and his word were alone sufficient, "you must come up to the work, as I tell you, or you'll never get to heaven"—"you must not go away from this house to night without submitting to God, or you'll go to hell." Instead of speaking as one who must himself give account, he stands like one whose prerogative it is to pass sentence. Instead of attempting to make "persuasion do the work of fear," he employs whatever truth and reason he may have at his command, as mere instruments of violence. As if none of his hearers had a right to think for himself; or no christian could for a moment hesitate; as if to doubt the truth of his positions, or the propriety of his course were to expose one's self to just damnation, all is to be received from his lips as positive

\* Taylor's Epist. Ded. to the Liberty of Prophesying.

certainly, and acted on as the only possible way of securing our own, or the salvation of others. The expression of his countenance and the tones of his voice are in perfect unison with the dogmatism of his spirit. Though he may have but just emerged into the light of the nineteenth century, so far from pitying, he can only sneer at those who remain in the darkness of past ages. Though he professes to feel for sinners, there is in his manner no tender compassion for man in his fallen state, no leniency towards the imperfections of christians, no forbearance towards those who do not exactly accord with his views. To hear him preach, you would suppose (if indeed he did not more than once distinctly intimate it,) that he alone was right; that the Gospel had scarcely ever been preached before; that on his lips were suspended the destinies of his auditors. You would be startled by his own affirmation that he himself was responsible for the salvation or damnation of the whole Church; and you would reasonably conclude, that like the butcher whose mind had become imbued with the spirit of Cade's reform, he meant "to knock down sin as an ox, and to cut the throat of iniquity like a calf"—so much does his indignation against sin exceed his pity of the condition and concern for the recovery of the sinner. What an improvement on the old notion, that *the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves*. What a reproach to those aged ministers who though firm in declaring the will of God, and steady in maintaining the cause of truth, are yet mild towards the gainsaying, condescending to the weak, using rather entreaty than command and beseeching their hearers by the *lowliness and gentleness of Christ*.

As Calvinists, in occasional instances, may have gone to an extreme—merging the doctrines of Divine Sovereignty and Grace, into the principles of Fatalism or of Antinomianism; so have some of our modern preachers verged to the other extreme—sinking man's responsibility into the notion of free will, and enforcing the law to the disparagement or enfeebling of the Gospel. Whatever the subject of discourse, strong views are taken of the truth; i. e. it is pushed out of its Scriptural proportions, and each point forced into a test of the activity of the Church, and the piety of Christians. Whatever the text, an investigation of its meaning, is sure to evolve the spirit of ultraism, and to dis-

close some reason why their system is more agreeable to common sense, and more calculated to build up the Redeemer's kingdom. Unlike one who though he discovers in some separate district many curious matters of research, yet keeps the field of truth so comprehensively in his view that he can notice and illustrate, as he proceeds, all the characters of the relation of the parts to one another and to the whole—our preacher goes straight forward in pursuance of his plan, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, except so far as it is necessary to make the facts and truths of Scripture bend to his object. Unable, from want of good sense and moderation, to generalize without laxity, he carries out an abstract principle in religion or in morals, until fanaticism springs from his view of devotedness; perfection, from works; asceticism, from his views of Christian morality; turbulence and wild misrule, from his idea of liberty; and the order of God's house is sacrificed to his immediatism. As Plato remarked of Diogenes, that he was "Socrates in a phrensy," so may it be said of our ultra preacher, so far as he bears any resemblance to the Apostolic model, that he is Paul in a phrensy; and his preaching may be justly termed, a *caricature* of the Gospel. The doctrine of Election, for example, is our making choice of God; the divine Decrees, are the decisions of the will; Regeneration, is a change of one's governing purpose; Divine Agency, is moral suasion; belief in Christ, is the same thing as confidence in your neighbour that he will pay his note; prayer, is certainty that we shall have what we ask; the pool of Bethesda, is the anxious seat, and so on. No wonder, that this mode of preaching is so happy in rendering every point perfectly intelligible to the meanest capacity! This, as we suppose, will account, also, for the fact, that so much less time is devoted by the preacher now than formerly to the doctrinal instruction of his people—the whole system being mastered, like some recent modes of teaching the languages, in a few easy lessons. In the course of his subsequent ministrations, he often alludes to his doctrines, but it is only a recurrence to principles already established, and from which, as they are fully understood, if not admitted, by his auditors, he aims to bring them to bear on their feelings and actions.

In this respect, also, it is ultra. One might naturally suppose, that there were no minds to be enlightened, no

virtues to be cultivated, no closet and fireside duties to be discharged,—so stimulating are the preacher's appeals to the passions, so frequent his exposure and condemnation of vices; with such uniform strength do his discourses bear on outward actions and public offices. Indeed, it is a fair inference from his manner of preaching, that religion cannot prosper where there is no excitement and ado; that no man can have certain evidence of his belief who is not perpetually "doing"; that it is the chief duty of every converted man to labor for the conversion of the world; that it is the love of the world which withholds Christians from "coming up to the work," as "nothing but pride holds back the sinner from coming to the anxious seat, or inquiry meeting."

That this preaching is burthensome, acrid and denunciatory, will not, we presume, be denied by those, who by adopting the same style, or connecting themselves with the class among whom it obtains, have not committed themselves, *nolens volens*, to approve. To say, that it imposes burthens which rival the impositions of Romanism, and almost induce the suspicion that we have fallen back into the ceremonial requisitions of the Jewish age, were simply to give utterance to the indignant feelings of many a mind in the community. It would seem that some aimed to secure a *tythe of mint, annis and cummin*, than attention to the *weightier matters of the law* and the Gospel. We would not be unjustly severe; but we feel constrained to ask, whether the direct tendency of preaching, in some instances, be not to lead the people to attach more sacredness and importance to evening meetings during the week, than to the duties of the Sabbath and the sanctuary; to morning or evening prayer meetings, than to the private and domestic altar; to noisy zeal, than to the duties of private life; to abstinence from meats and drinks, than to keeping the heart; to human agency, than to Divine efficiency; to public charities, than to the great principles of morality and benevolence—to promote noise and talk about religion—a spasmodic devotedness, an ostentatious benevolence and insidious phariseism, rather than that religion which is humble as well as pure, and truly spiritual by being prayerfully and habitually active; which winds its way through the haunts of sin and the abodes of suffering, without blow-

ing a trumpet, or reviling those who will not follow in her steps.

For a time, perhaps, the people come up to the work; but as might be expected, when the piety of a Church is estimated by the number of its meetings, and the variety of societies which it patronises, the spiritual overseer discovers something else, or more to be done; and his preaching, consequently, becomes still more urgent and exciting. When, however, a reaction takes place, which follows as regularly and necessarily as exhaustion of the body on its undue stimulus by artificial means, then, the style of the preacher becomes charged with a sour and fanatical virulence, while the apathy or irritability of the people only induces a more rancorous form of reprobatory preaching. This, too, have we witnessed, and often have we heard the remark, "we must either neglect our necessary business, the interests of our households, and come in to all our pastor's meetings and measures, or see ourselves held up on the Sabbath, and before the world, as inconsistent, hypocritical, soul's stumbling blocks, Spirit-grieving professors."

We are aware that this preaching is thought to be a wonderful improvement on the dull didactic preaching of our fathers,—that it is in contradistinction from all old sermonizing, eminently practical. We admit, that a modern sermon is less scholastic in its arrangement, less precise and formal in its divisions and subdivisions; and in its entire structure, perhaps, better fitted to awaken attention, but that it contains more spiritual aliment for the Christian, more cautions against self-deception and formality, more alarms to the conscience, than almost any sermon on which we may chance to light, as we open some folio of the seventeenth century, will not be asserted by those who have made the writings of such men as Flavel, Erskine, Howe, or Henry, their study. In comparison with discourses of that period, ours hardly deserve the name of practical Gospel sermons. But to call the preaching to which we particularly allude *practical*, is a gross misnomer. It is *personal*, having a designed and obvious reference to individuals, not characteristic, having reference to man as the subject of a depraved, or of a partially sanctified nature. It is aimed against him whom the preacher conceives to be a hypocrite, not against hypocrisy,—as sometimes the indi-



vidual, be his character what it may, is prayed for by name ; against particular vices, instead of vice in general ; against particular overt ways of breaking the Sabbath, instead of aiming to promote the spiritual observance of the Sabbath ; against particular kinds of business or forms of wordly amusement, instead of worldliness of mind ; against those who speak evil of us, than against evil speaking ; against neglect of prayer meetings, instead of a prayerless spirit ; and so in relation to other points. If, however, by a practical sermon, be meant one that necessarily excites some, as it exasperates others—one that stimulates professors to out door action, and sinners to commit themselves—then the palm of popular preaching has certainly been reserved for some of our day.

Too many, we apprehend, have no other idea of a practical preacher of the Gospel, of one whose preaching will do good, than the style and measures of a revivalist. To account for this, we have only to refer to the encomiums bestowed on this order, by certain religious newspapers, and to the pains which they themselves have taken to create the impression. Human nature has so little changed, that let a man set himself up as a conversion worker, and he will be in as great estimation and request, as those Romish priests who wrought miracles. The general credulity is secured by extraordinary measures, as the interest of mankind was awakened by occurrences apparently supernatural. As it was thought necessary during the dark ages, to perform miracles, in order to elicit belief in Christianity, on the same principle, are revival measures deemed indispensable to promote religion. The evidences of Christianity were deemed insufficient to conviction of the truth, so are the ordinary means of grace too often regarded as poorly adapted to induce repentance, and too generally neglected. But let it be bruited that there will be a *special effort* in a certain Church, and the throng will be disappointed if wonders be not performed. Hence, so rooted and grounded is the revivalist in his notion of the efficiency of special efforts, that he virtually fixes the time for his revival, though it may be referred to the commencement of the next year. There is no longer a field of usefulness for him, if but few remain who have not been subjected to the anxious seat process. All whom he has admitted to the Church are full grown men in Christ, though but yesterday they were unsubdued sinners !



So infatuated has he become by always discoursing on those subjects which tend to rouse the church, and alarm the impenitent, that he imagines himself peculiarly fitted, if not selected, for animating the lethargic and arresting the thoughtless. Should he suddenly die in his work, he might be called a martyr to religious excitements, as a recently deceased clergyman has been formally styled, "martyr," not to the Gospel, (no, that savors too much of olden times,) but "to the seventh commandment."

Now we doubt not but that some have a happier natural, or even acquired talent for addressing the backsliding and the impenitent, than others; nor do we think that any one discharges his duty who does not, times and again, declare the displeasure of Heaven against worldliness and sin, and often announce a judgment to come. But when a minister confines his attention to those who are sluggish within, and careless without the pale of his Church—when we find him copious, eloquent and at ease only on the subject of the lukewarmness and hypocrisy of professors, in connection with the perdition of ungodly men—when we see him hurling the bolts of divine vengeance against Churches and individuals, we cannot but impute to him a gloomy extravagance of temper. The very idea of being thus commissioned, and signally fitted for reviving the Church and converting sinners, implies a feeling of arrogance and self-sufficiency, not very consistent with the Scriptural belief, that it is *not by might, nor by power, but by God's spirit*, that the Christian ministry accomplishes its ends; while it is altogether dissimilar from the preaching of the apostles, and not even justified by the preaching of the Baptist, which was designed to be in preparation for the coming of the Messiah, an energetic corrective of the punctilious piety and fanatical presumption of the Jews.

The most difficult achievement in preaching, is the proper manner of treating the doctrines of mercy and of wrath, and the temper of the heart is not less accurately denoted by the effort, than the power and discrimination of the mind. This indeed, as has been remarked, is a searching test of the preacher's character, for "while a self-commissioned and fanatical reformer holds back whatever might seem emollient or consolatory, and is really unable to strike any chord that is not harsh: the true messenger of heaven, on the contrary, shows whence he has received his instructions by

frequently reverting, and with a natural ease, to bright hopes and mild persuasives.\*

The discourses of preachers of this class, whether they be itinerants or pastors, and though their aim as revivalists be one, are often characterized by frequent violations of that unity which is indispensable in order to induce one impression on the minds of an audience. Amid such an exhaustless variety of fertile topics as the Bible affords, there is no excuse for transgressing this rule in the construction of sermons. It is the preacher's own fault, not of his text, if his sermon be digressive and desultory; and though his subject may admit of separate divisions, or parts and appendages, if he do not so preserve their union and connection, as to make the whole concur in a simple, undivided impression. Now, what effect can be made on the minds of an intelligent or serious audience, by a discourse which, as from a starting post, takes leave of its text as soon as it is announced, and descants in no measured strains on opposition to revivals, the dignified religion of Doctors of Divinity, the anti-scriptural character of their titles, the practice of reading sermons and prayers, the coldness of other Churches, the absurdities of orthodoxy, &c. &c.; though some good remarks may be interspersed, though the conclusion of the whole may be impressive in itself, yet what impression, we ask, can be produced, but that this is a very novel style of preaching the Gospel? When, too, we indulge in an occasional stroke of satire or ridicule, at the expense, perhaps, of some of the best men in the Church, or of some of the most praiseworthy men in the community; and not only introduce anecdotes in quick succession, but by voice and manner, (for illustration's sake) represent a variety of personages, what might not our discourse be termed, rather than a serious Gospel sermon, designed and adapted to improve the heart. Where others laughed, how often have we been inclined to weep. Where others have been captivated, we have seen all glare, and point, and quaint conceits, with little to the understanding, and nothing to the heart. Where a multitude have hung on the lips of a preacher, we have retired from a scene where the desk was degraded, if not profaned. Are we fastidious? "When I go to the house of God," said the late Dr. Mason, "I do not want amusement. I want that *doc-*

\* *Fanaticism*, p. 296.

*trine which is according to Godliness.* I want to hear of the remedy against the harrassings of my guilt, and the disorder of my affections. I want to be led from weariness and disappointment, to that *goodness which filleth the hungry soul.* I want to have light upon the mystery of Providence—to be taught how the *judgments of the Lord are right*—how I shall be prepared for duty and for trial—how I may *pass the time of my sojourning here in fear*, and close it in peace.”\*

If, however, any sort of unity be preserved by some whom we have observed, it is the unity of self rather than of the subject. If the preacher forget his text, it is very obvious that he does not forget himself. If his thoughts wander, the interests of self instigate the digression. We used to think that Christ should be held up before an audience of dying sinners, so as to hide the preacher; but now, if the rule be not practically reversed, it is often, we fear, greatly infringed. Certain it is, that school often shades the Bible, and thoughts are so conveniently arranged, or so unfortunately scarce, that *little I*, has space enough to magnify himself, or time enough with his train of active associates, of wonderful experiences, of varied observations, to figure on the stage—perhaps to introduce his parentage and marvellous history to the acquaintance of the people. Sometimes, despite of the unaccommodating nature of his subject, or the impropriety of the occasion, he reverts to his former place of labor, or the incidents of his travels—to something or other about himself, with an ease which, were it not most obviously natural, would fail to amuse.

Oblivion of self, is as difficult as it is a rare attainment; yet who is worthy of being called an ambassador for Christ, who does not surrender his mind and heart to the entire possession of his subject? Where there is so much vanity, can there be but little sincerity? Where one makes himself the centre of all his thoughts and movements, is it not that the people may throng him, rather than the cross?

In these days, when excitement is demanded, and religion is estimated by the rapidity of additions to the Church, and by the multiplicity of projects for the conversion of the world, there is no ordinary temptation to egotistical preaching. The more we are able to enumerate cases of conver-

\* Mason's Works, vol. 1, p. 28.

sion or of reformation, in which our own boldness or skill is displayed, the wider will be the conviction of our importance to the church ; the more we are able to tell what we have done in our own limits, for the different Societies, of course, the greater will be our reputation among their officers and agents, and the more shall we be in demand as anniversary speakers.

But the prominent cause of this egotism, in some instances, is want of thought. Admirable substitute, this, for the properties and resources of intellect. Love renders the slowest fluent—the dullest eloquent—and when one is enamoured of himself, though he may have but little knowledge of his text, no faculty for argumentation or invention, and no resources from study ; he can be at no loss for matter or expression. This readiness and fluency are often mistaken for smartness, but a dunce may talk about himself by the hour, and display very considerable ability, when, if he should open his mouth on any other subject, the secret which self love now enables him to keep, would at once be discovered.

If we are thought to be severe, let it be considered, whether the residuum of egotism and zeal, be not hypocrisy ? Though there may be no conscious insincerity, is there any of that humility and modesty which enabled Paul to add, when *forced* to speak of himself, "*yet not I, but the grace of God ?*"

The final characteristic of the style of preaching to which we particularly allude, is extreme poverty of thought. Admitting that self is kept in the back ground, seldom is more than one idea brought forward. Admit that it is at first striking, the preacher repeats himself almost every Sabbath. Repetition, to a certain extent, is unavoidable, as the great truths of religion are few and simple ; but they may be presented in a great variety of lights, while the most common thoughts, from a mind imbued with the spirit of the Bible, will come forth with an air of originality—living eloquent images, to strike the imagination and impress the heart. But by some, the truths of Revelation seem to be reduced to a narrower limit, and common thoughts are rendered still more common. No matter how different the text, or how seemingly varied the plans and illustrations, the same moveable head goes round, and like the toy for children, from which some face looks out upon you, whether from beneath the crown of a king, periwig of a judge, or the cap of a hus-

sar, so does the same idea obtrude itself on the audience, whether the subject be the love or the wrath of God—the requisitions of the law or the invitations of the Gospel—the blessedness of heaven or the torments of hell.

*God is love, ex gr*, because he has made us free moral agents, or because he will damn the wicked. God is *Almighty*, yet he cannot save you if you will not repent. We are *saved by grace*, because if we were not able to obey the law, God would be bound in justice to save us, and he would be an infinite tyrant if he did not. Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, because you are capable of choice, and responsible for your choices. We are justified by faith, because faith is a voluntary exercise of the mind. *It is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*; i. e., God will do his part, if sinners will do their part. So, because Jesus said, before raising Lazarus, *take ye away the stone from the cave*, therefore God never does what man can do. Take ye away the stone from your hearts. *Comfort ye my people*; i. e., set them to work; and this is the remedy for every doubt which may oppress, every difficulty which may perplex the Christian's mind: yea, this is the medium through which he must look for consolation even in his afflictions. Theology is summed up in the doctrine of "ability," and all religion is comprised in the duty of "working." We need not adduce other examples—they will readily occur to the minds of our readers.

When we have attended certain Churches, and heard the words "ability," "obligation," &c., occurring with such laborious iteration, the question has been painfully obtruded on our mind, are not these men enslaved to one idea—bound hand and foot by the shackles of a system—have they ever looked into the varying character and condition of mankind? Why then do they not aim to *give to every one his portion of meat in due season*? Have they made the Bible a study? Why then do they contemplate Revelation in one aspect alone? Why, by their preaching, do they detract so much from the exhaustless variety of its topics? Are such topics as the scheme of mediation, the mediator's character, his vicarious sacrifice for the atonement of sin, too antiquated for modern times? What has become of the principles of evangelical morality, as well as the doctrines of grace? Have we lost sight of the providence of God—his unremit-

ted care of life, his regard for the poor, the feeble and the lowly—his promises to his people—his forbearance towards the disobedient? If not conversant with classical literature, why not adduce our illustrations from sacred history and song, or in imitation of our great teacher, from the garden and the field—from bright skies, domestic labors, and rustic occupations—and not from revolutionary tales of horror, or from human nature under its most revolting or disgusting aspects? This monotony of thought and illustration, is perhaps, not so much owing to any native deficiency of mind, as the influence of *system* on the imagination and the heart. It is scarcely possible, we conceive, to surrender the mind to the petty metaphysics and withering opinions of this system of theology, without losing all taste alike for the beauties of nature and the charms of the Bible—all sense both of the goodness of Providence, and the riches of divine grace. The Father of mercies is lost sight of in the law-giver, and all sense of dependence is merged in responsibility. The mind becomes fixed in one mood, and the character is reduced to the narrowest range. "If we ought, in any case, to rely upon the universal principles of human nature, as they are gathered from history and observation, we may affirm that it is the property of gloomy or malignant opinions, or of notions that are preposterous and exaggerated, to impart a certain fixedness or monotony to the mind and temper; the passions become set—the style of expression, even if vehement and copious, is of one order only—the themes of discourse are few, and the drift is ever the same."<sup>\*</sup>

No one can contrast the sermons of this class of preachers, with those, *ex. gr.* of Samuel Davies, Robert Hall, Thomas Gisbourne, or the late Dr. Mason, without perceiving what we mean by preaching a meagre metaphysical system, in contradistinction from the Gospel of Christ. But to contrast some volumes of sermons which have of late been published, and widely circulated, with the volumes *ex. gr.* of Barrow and Tillotson whom many have been wont to condemn on account of their Arminian spirit, is at once to perceive a difference, as wide, as it is disparaging. We allude not to the exuberantly copious yet precise and energetic diction—the close logic with the amplifying powers of the former; or to the solid sense, the simple order,

\* *Fanaticism*, p. 355.

and terse language of the latter. Leaving out of view the classical references which at once confirm and irradiate the positions of the one, and the unpremeditated graces which impart both interest and force to the pages of the other, there is more thought in one of the sermons of either of these distinguished names, than in a score of such discourses as we ordinarily hear from our pulpits—more legitimate and reverent use of Scripture, more that is conducive to the edification of the Church, to the reformation of society, and to the thorough conversion of the worldling, than may be ordinarily gathered from the whole series of discourses at one of our protracted meetings, or from the lips of an itinerating Evangelist during the whole term of his “beseeching and besieging” a particular congregation. Considering the *spirit* which is evinced by some, to turn from hearing one of their discourses to the pages of such a sermonizer as good old Bishop Leighton, is like escaping from a dreary and pestilential swamp, to a garden “where the lilies are always white and in full bloom, the saffron blooming, the trees sweat out their balsams, and the tree of life is in the midst thereof.” Or as far as mere *thought* is concerned, the difference between some of our most popular preachers, and those whose sermons have long been consigned to the dust and silence of the upper shelf, is that which exists between a modern toy shop and a royal cabinet of minerals. Yet nothing is more frequently eulogized among this class of preachers, than their profound thought, their logical argumentation, their thorough acquaintance with the Scriptures, their overpowering eloquence! Verily,

“We all with one consent praise new-born gauds,  
And give to dust that is a little gilt,  
More laud than gilt o’er dusted.”

We do not wish to convey the impression that the pulpit at the present day, numbers no truly great or eloquent preachers. Were it not invidious to mention names, we might allude to one who is not less remarkable for soundness and compass of thought, than for chasteness of illustration and propriety of language; and to another, in whose discourses splendor is united with strength and strength with splendor, as the most valuable metal has weight as well as brilliancy; and to a few, whose sermons executed with consummate grace, possess a secret charm that touches, af-



fects, and delights their audience ; but we have no hesitation in expressing our opinion, that among the popular class of preachers to which we refer, and it comprises many grades of talent, a man of more than one idea, or of correct habits of writing and speaking, is a *rara avis*.

We might, however, allude to instances of popular preaching, which almost in every particular is the reverse of that we have attempted to describe. So far from being dogmatic, or fanatical, there are popular preachers who are neither decided nor zealous ; who though they are neither desultory, egotistical, nor familiarly illustrative, betray but little acquaintance with their subject and no power of thought—whose composition is flowery verbiage, whose force consists in varied articulations, whose attraction is that of graceful elocution. Not that we object to manner. By no means ; it is, as has been justly remarked, a part of the truth ; but it need not be observed that manner alone is not pulpit eloquence, however much it may charm those, who are more accustomed to gratify their eye and their ear, than to exercise their minds. If rough and noisy declamation please the throng, it is quite as obvious, that affected prettinesses, and silvery tones, hold the *eruditum vulgus*. To deserve the meed of pulpit eloquence, it is not only necessary that the preacher's manner should be weighty and dignified, but his sermons should at once enlighten the understanding, please the imagination, and influence the affections.\*

Without further notice of this order of preachers who may be called the *calamistri*† of the pulpit, we proceed to an inquiry respecting the causes of that style of preaching which is peculiar to our own times.

Among these may be mentioned the admission of partially educated men to the Ministry. That there has been of late an increasing number of this character, will not be denied. Whether the Education Society, in that desire of increasing its numbers and extending its influence which is common to all voluntary Associations, may not have contributed to this, we shall not stop to decide. That the exaggerated representations and impassioned appeals of some of our Education Agents, may have induced many to enter

\* *Optimus est orator qui dicendo animos audientium et docet, et delectat, et permovet.—Tully.*

† *De Clari's Orat. S. 262.*

the Ministry who might better have remained at their original avocations, we are not alone in suspecting. Be this as it may.

Some through the zeal which was enkindled in their breast amid the scenes of a modern excitement, have felt themselves called to abandon the shop for the pulpit ; and in view of the greatness of the harvest and the paucity of laborers ; or the greater scarceness of their own pecuniary means, have been constrained to curtail the usual preparatory course of years ; while persons of influence have not been wanting to heighten their impatience and assist their endeavors—perhaps to construe the precocity of their gifts into a preparation for the sacred desk, which some old incumbents might well envy. Inflated, consequently, with a notion of their own endowments, and “fresh from knowing little,” they can discover no more adaptedness to the conversion of souls in the tomes of old Theology, than in the works of Greece and Rome. They have already labored with approbation, perhaps success, in Sunday Schools, in Tract distribution, in *little* meetings, and forthwith the incipient light beams forth from the desk. What is the sequel ? Finding that the regular ministry demands resources of mind which it is now too late to secure ; that no intelligent, or influential auditory can be gathered where there is no opulence of thought and propriety of discourse, he endeavors to make up in noisy zeal what he lacks in sense and knowledge ; to supply his deficiency in argument by paradox—in style by redundancy, while the speedy exhaustion of his materials even for interesting the uneducated classes of society, is adroitly concealed by frequently changing his position.—Meanwhile, the learning, and literature, and eloquence of other clergymen, by his customary insinuations and occasional animadversions, are made to appear but heathen attainments compared with his own purity of purpose and self-immolating devotions. The people are virtually taught from his lips to associate dullness with learning, scholasticism with theology, pride of reputation with taste, and coldness of heart with labor of thought and purity of diction. No wonder that he becomes their Paragon of piety, as well as their Oracle. It is human nature, to love to hear attainments depreciated which we do not possess, and he who despises study and learning, to display his zeal, purchases by hypocrisy, that which he has not mind enough to secure.

Unable to withstand his solicitations, and encouraged by his success, some of his converts from among the lower class of society are induced to undertake the work of the ministry; and thus men, but poorly fitted by early habits and associations, and still less by natural talents and educational advantages for the ministry, increase and multiply. Should such an one become a Professor in an Institute which was founded by kindred spirits, it will readily be perceived, what a door would at once be open for uneducated preachers; or should there be a majority of such preachers in a Presbytery, it would be as strange, if any deficiency in knowledge should frustrate the licensure of a candidate, so long as he possessed an ample share of zeal and confidence, as for a faculty of Thompsonian Physicians to reject the examination of a student who had faith in the virtues of *lobelia*.

As the great masters of ancient eloquence laid its foundation in a thorough study of the civil law, so must the foundation of pulpit eloquence be laid in a thorough knowledge of the Bible; and this requires years of laborious study—the subsidiary acquisition of several languages, of many histories and of different sciences. Demosthenes had never rendered his eloquence more potent than Philip's arms, had he not constantly attended the lectures of Plato. The name of Cicero had never been identified with that of eloquence itself, had it not been for the walks of the Academy; nor can any one attain to great pulpit eloquence who is not capable of joining to the truths of Inspired Writ the deepest results of unassisted reason; whom enlarged and varied study has not endowed with an affluence of ideas, and an elevation of sentiment, equally with the ready command of appropriate diction. Without a disciplined and well stored mind; without a studied acquaintance with men and manners, and with the best examples of eloquence in former ages—without a style formed by constant practice, a man may have a talent for speaking but he can never become the ornament of the pulpit. Possessing shrewdness or wit, with fluency and flexibility of address, he may have all the requisites for attracting the common mind; but his discourses will be at once wide from nature and void of truth. A stranger to the great works of the past, his judgment will lack discrimination, as well as candor and modesty. Ignorant of classical antiquity, he can no more illus-

trate Scripture with propriety and beauty, than he can interpret it with correctness. Having no habits of logical thought, his theology will confound what should be separated, and sever what should be united—the greatest points will be unexplained, the least will be magnified, while fancy predominates, and errors with disorders ensue. Being devoid of taste, like all uncultivated minds, he will form himself on vulgar standards; or in defiance of those models of eloquence which have received the suffrages of mankind, he makes himself his standard. The greater his natural talents, therefore, the more readily will he turn the minds of the people from real excellence in the pulpit. The corruption of sacred eloquence is always owing to some superior natural mind which has acquired distinction by a new, or peculiar way of preaching. Such an one pleases by his defects; his admirers or converts imitate his vicious manner; and thus from the vitiation of the public taste, others are driven to the same petty expedients to secure attention; to hunt after anecdote when they should convince by argument—to captivate by conceits, or impress by violence, when they can be no longer eloquent by using the *words of truth and soberness*.

But the initiation of uneducated men, or the rapidity and superficiality of preparatory studies, is not the only difficulty. Too many, forgetting that the completion of their preparatory course, should be but the commencement of real, profitable study, abandon the habits which they had formed, perhaps, at the expense of much time and toil, and slide into the ranks of the *busy-indolent*.\* Where, we had almost said, is the settled clergyman who is a regular and diligent student? So little application to close study is there, it is no wonder that sermons should so seldom disclose the results of well digested thought; that in general they should betray a mind impoverished by neglect, or exhausted by incipient labor. In some instances, this is to be attributed to natural sluggishness of mind or incapacity for studious application—the love of ease, or aversion from thought, being gratified even to the approbation of conscience, by the flattery which has been bestowed on discourses which cost the preacher no preparatory effort. These very sermons which his own consciousness of their demerits rendered him

\* Vid. Coleridge's classification of the world of minds. *Aids to Reflection*, p. 302.

at first almost ashamed to deliver, have been received, he is delicately informed, with more approbation, than his carefully prepared or elaborated discourses. And not pausing to consider that the least judicious are always the most complimentary ; or to ask himself whether the judgment of "a fit audience found though few" might not reverse the judgment of the many, he infers that the less his preparation the more is he prepared ; and consequently relaxing his mental exertions, depends for his favorable reception on the manner in which he presents his few common places.

That such sermons, however, should be oftentimes well received, is not of difficult explanation. Hearers, in general, seldom forward to charge themselves with lack of perception, or with habits of inattention, are never backward to pronounce a discourse dull or unintelligible which demands an effort of thought and attention ; but let one be delivered "either in skipping, unconnected, short-winded, asthmatic sentences, as easy to be understood as impossible to be remembered, in which the merest common-place acquires a momentary poignancy, a petty titillating sting from affected point or wilful antithesis, or else in strutting and sounded periods, in which the emptiest truisms are blown up into illustrious bubbles by the help of film and inflation," and not a few will exclaim, "this is sense ! this I understand and admire ! I have thought the very same a hundred times myself !" Indeed, it is too much with sermons as with the current literature, and the preacher as an author, aims to please rather than to instruct ; or if he aim to benefit, it is in such a way as not to demand from his hearers any additional thought. Thus, both hearer and preacher exert a reciprocal influence ; and while the mind of the one is in no respect elevated, that of the other is every way degraded ; his sermons are the products of a barren mind, straining itself to meet the exigency of the occasion ; and from having too long neglected to increase his resources, he ultimately finds himself much in the same condition with the Israelites who were doomed to produce their number of bricks without straw.

But while the taste of the people becomes more corrupt, the judgment of preachers is apt to be swayed by their desire of doing good ; or in some instances, perhaps, the natural love of popularity, is gratified, in adapting one's discourses to the common understanding. The popularity of

the man becomes the criterion of the merits of his preaching, even though his popularity be confined to the most illiterate and excitable classes of society. He attributes the fact that other preachers are not thronged to the ill-adaptedness of their discourses to the comprehension and interest of the people; when in fact his own popularity may be owing to an adaptation of himself to the tastes and passions of the lowest order of intellect—or to those who prefer “a poignant and stimulating to a simple and nourishing diet, and would infinitely rather have their passions awakened, than their conscience directed or their understanding enlarged.” He is plain and pointed, whereas others are too vague and dull; but it is that mode of speaking which though it is justified and constitutes the chief interest, at the Bar, cannot be excused in the Pulpit. It is undoubtedly more interesting to the many to talk about men than things, about vices, than sin—to deal in illustrations of truth instead of truth itself—to hear the doings of men introduced to illustrate the ways of God, than to be confronted by the law and the testimony; but to call this an adaptation of the Gospel to our hearers is an egregious error, a palpable absurdity. The people come not to hear the truth, but its familiar illustrations; not to be impressed by doctrines, but to be amused by anecdotes; not to be made better, but to be excited. Adaptedness to the common mind, and therefore the right kind of preaching! So is a *penny paper* adapted to the common mind; but who will say that it is calculated to improve and elevate the mental and moral condition of the people? So is the oratory of a demagogue adapted to the common mind, but the true interests of a nation are alone regarded by the eloquence of a Webster.

This adaptation of one's self to the common mind in such a way as to secure the audience of a crowd, is conclusive evidence of superior merit in preaching, in the view of those who have no higher idea of eloquence than the power of moving the passions; but not in their judgment who regard passion as simply subsidiary to the end of eloquence. The eloquence of the preacher, however, is to be judged of, not only by his crowded house, but by his success—be it so: but what is the success of those whose discourses are thus formed on the popular taste? Is it the great end of pulpit eloquence? Has he persuaded the many for the love of Christ, to be wise, and just, and good? This is the



difficult achievement of the pulpit, utterly unattainable by the highest order of human speech without the aid of Almighty grace. But who does not know that there is more of the "fool than the wise" in human nature; that men in general are more easily excited by the powers of speech to the most absurd opinions, the wildest extravagances, than to the doctrines which are according to godliness? Many a man with no other power than that of calumny and self-praise, has been followed by trooping multitudes. "Those who court popular applause and look upon it as the pinnacle of human glory to be blindly followed by the multitude, commonly recur to defamation especially of superiors and brethren, not so much for a subject on which they may display their eloquence, as for a succedaneum to supply their want of eloquence, a succedaneum which never yet was found to fail. \* \* To lead a sect, to infuse party spirit, to make men arrogant, uncharitable, and malevolent is the easiest task imaginable, and to which almost any blockhead is fully equal. But to produce the contrary effect, to subdue the spirit of faction, and that monster, spiritual pride, with which it is invariably accompanied, to inspire equity, moderation and charity into men's sentiments with regard to others, is the genuine test of eloquence."\*

We stop not to inquire whether this will apply to any in our day, though if some preachers have not set the example, it is strange that their followers should so freely discuss the religion of neighboring churches and denominations. We would simply remark, that to persuade the people to a course to which they are inclined by the depravity, or the deceitfulness of their hearts, is no criterion of the power of eloquence. Is it not easier to influence men to pray occasionally in public, than habitually in private? to make an ado respecting religion, than to put on Christ? to prevail on numbers to join the Church, than to multiply additions to the piety of the Church? to induce one to pledge his name, than to mortify his lusts? to be active in societies and meetings, than to abound in the peaceable fruits of righteousness? to make him phariseeic, than kind, and humble, and devout? to make men despise the bigotry of orthodoxy, than love the severity of truth? to detest the rum-seller, the slaveholder, and the unclean, than to pity the intemperate,

\* Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric, pp. 143-4.



to relieve the oppressed, and keep themselves unspotted from the world? to change public opinion, than to change the heart? No wonder that effects are produced when the preacher becomes the pleader, and induces detestation of the criminal, rather than of the crime—when actions are substituted for the work of the affections, and doing the will of man for the self-denying service of God!

Yet the ostensible effects of this mode of preaching have led to its adoption by others. Some, we doubt not, sincerely, unwittingly deeming its effects sure evidences of God's blessing; and some, we fear, from vain glory, for alas! there is enough of the remains of depravity in the most sanctified of mortals, to render him impatient in the use of the established means of grace, while hundreds are at one time added to the communion of a neighboring Church.

This desire of numbers, *this* it is, we apprehend, which has tended more than any one cause, to deteriorate the style of modern preaching—to prostitute the desk to novel opinions, noisy declamation, and exciting scenes, and divest religion of all that is amiable, lovely, and of good report. This aiming at immediate and outward effects, is the reason, why the vision of some has been contracted until it would seem as if the glorious Gospel did afford but one subject of discourse—this impression, that there is no good effected by a sermon unless sinners can be drawn at once to the "anxious seat," or induced to retire to the "enquiry room;" and Christians be prevailed on to remain and pray for their conversion,—this importance, attached to occasional special efforts for awakening the Church and arresting the thoughtless—to regular evening meetings for the purposes of prayer and exhortation, or to further the objects of societies.

How can one command time for studious and undisturbed retirement; or if time, how can one employ it to advantage whose elasticity of mind and vigor of body must be impaired by such a constant series of monotonous and exhausting efforts? Necessarily hasty and immature in his preparations—obliged often to extemporize without even the previous arrangement of his remarks, how can his sermons be else than ill digested performances, often erroneous, invariably digressive, and ultimately repetitions,—varying only in less coherent argument, less striking illustrations, less judicious appeals, and greater vulgarity of expression.

No one, we contend, can throw himself into the system

of New Measures without contracting his range of thought, and blunting the finest sensibilities of his soul.

The very importance attached to Protracted Meetings and New Measures, has lessened, we are inclined to think, to a great degree, that sense of the importance which the Clergy were wont to attach to thorough preparation for the duties of the desk. Every one feels that it would be out of keeping with the spirit and object of these meetings to discourse on any other subject, or in any other manner, save such as is calculated to stimulate the Church to outward effort, and urge the impenitent to precipitate a decision. After the protracted effort, he feels too, that all has been done that could be done. If any still remain without the pale of the Church, he can discourse to them on nothing but hardness of heart; if the Church relapse, he is left to berate them for lukewarmness and hypocrisy.

Indeed, it may seriously be considered whether this constant effort in the eyes of the public, have not a tendency to preclude attention to his own spiritual concerns; whether the proper spirit of a Gospel preacher be not endangered by special efforts, which imply, though not avowedly, dependence on ourselves; and especially, if they be not altogether successful; whether the gratification which he experiences in view of his numerical success, be not calculated to inflate him with spiritual pride? And if so, it is not surprising, though a popular speaker that he is not a good preacher, for no man can preach well, who is not penetrated with a sense of his own insufficiency and unworthiness—whose preparation is not prayerful as well as thoughtful. Without the spirit of one who feels that he himself is a sinner saved by grace,—as on the one hand, his discourses will be frivolous and ostentatious harangues, so on the other, will they be dogmatic, harsh, and egotistical.

A final reason for this style of preaching may be found in the spirit of the age. It is an age of novelty, innovation and excitement. Radicalism is rife in the state, and it might be expected that some, like Shakespeare's radical Clothier, would wish "to dress *the Church*, and turn it, and put a new nap on it." Admirable substitute for the elements of greatness, radicalism so readily secures to itself ample notoriety, that aspiring minds of ordinary powers are but too prone to avail themselves of its aid. It is less difficult to distinguish one's self as a politician, than as a statesman,

and for reasons not very dissimilar, it is easier to rise as an *ultra* than as a Gospel preacher—to be the moving cause of fanatical excitements, than the instrument of promoting pure and undefiled religion.

The mania for business, also, which characterizes our community, has infected the mind of the Church; and every thing in matters of religion and benevolence, it is often said, must be done in a "business like way;" i. e. there should be no respite from exertion, matters should be driven to their consummation! "Such a speech, was a business speech—that is coming to the point—that is bringing people up to the mark." And what was the speech? Why, as far as intellect and manner are concerned, if the subject had been the Bank instead of the Bible, it would have been as well received had it been delivered in the Park.

"Such a sermon will do good"—Why? Could a person of ordinary intelligence have failed to perceive that it lacked the spirit, while it conveyed only distorted views of Gospel truth? "But the attention of the people was rivetted; and many, though they could not forbear repeatedly laughing, were sometimes thrilled with fear, and again moved to tears."

"Such a minister will not answer for our Church; he is not a 'working man.' We must send to the far South; or the far West.—No one can fill these vacant pews but a working man." Now, this would seem to prove, that the good which is effected by the modern style of preaching, may, in some instances, at least, be ascertained by arithmetical calculation; and in other instances, if the Church have been erected as a speculation, or if it be heavily embarrassed by debt,—by the collection of dollars and cents.

In places where there exists a demand for excitement, a preacher of an excitable temperament, will be but too prone to minister fuel to the flame. Unless experience have taught him to beware; or his own prudence and forethought have led him to foresee the consequences, he will accommodate himself to the humors of his people; as others by their beautiful essays and flowery declamation, too often accommodate themselves to the taste of a gay and fashionable auditory. "The tendency of the Christian ministry, is always to move down from the high and arduous place which belongs to it, of a remedial function, to the lower, and more grateful posi-

tion of an office of delectation."\* And without enlarging on this thought, we may remark, that some are as readily pleased by anxious seats, multiplied meetings, societies, and mountebank oratory, as others are by tame discourse, few meetings, and cold formalities of worship. These numerous meetings, these various societies, these scenes of excitement, so common to some churches, are in themselves no more evidences of faithful Gospel preaching, than the reverse aspects in a church, are of unfaithful preaching.

The fact is, preaching, like oratory, is affected by the manners of the times. As is the man, so is his eloquence. Thus thought the ancients; and abundant illustrations of the correctness of their judgment, might be gathered from the history of our own times.

When excitement is the order of the age—when voluntary societies are in operation for the promotion of almost every object for which the Gospel was proclaimed, and the Church established—when Tetotalism defames, and Moral Reform points the finger of scorn, and Abolition howls—and the wide spread dissatisfaction with orthodoxy, and impatience of God's movements, Pelagius is again summoned from the dead—how is it possible that the minister who is stationed where old errors are regarded as new truths, and the established means of grace, as old and ineffective measures, should not, in some respects at least, adopt a novel kind of preaching? No man can surrender his judgment to the wisdom of our modern expedients for facilitating the conversion of the world, without exhibiting in the pulpit, to a greater or less degree, the ultraism of an Agent, the fanaticism of a Revivalist, or the imbecile conscientiousness, coupled with the pride and dogmatism of a Reformer. Yes, let a preacher only imbibe the spirit of voluntarism, with the theology of Pelagius, and provided he have any talent for illustrations, we assure him, if he covet the distinction, that his name shall be enrolled with that of the Finneys and Burchards of our day.

That little or no attention should be paid by this class of preachers to style, may readily be explained. They cannot think, like others who are destitute of genius and taste, that a fine style is incompatible with profound thought. Whatever their vanity, we know not that they make any preten-

\* Saturday Evening, p. 213.

sions to profundity, as it is certain they are not often accused of being too deep to be understood. If their sentiments, however, be clear, it is the clearness of the shallow stream, rather than of the deep lake.

They justify themselves in the neglect of style, by the opinion that style will appear the more natural, the less pains they bestow upon it, and that an easy familiar manner is necessary to being understood. Hence, their careless, ill constructed periods—their colloquial barbarisms, and vulgar phraseology. How well for self respect, that we can put to the score of superior judgment, what arises from incapacity ! Ease in writing, like ease in motion, is generally the result of the greatest care—so is perspicuity secured only by propriety of diction. A vulgar style necessary to being understood ! Then is Addison obscure, and Baxter unintelligible.

But it is the tendency of the times to go to extremes. Once we addressed children as if they were men—now men as if they were children. To be intelligible without descending to vulgarity, should be the rule of the preacher ; and we venture to say, that the sermons of Dr. Dwight, or of the late Doctors Payson and Griffin, are more intelligible to the ordinary mind, than any one of the sermons of Mr. Finney. But many of this class of preachers imagine, that unless they repel the high, they cannot attract the low—unless they disgust the educated, they cannot be understood by the illiterate.

At the same time all attractions of style, are thought to divert the mind from the matter of discourse. This is true, if by attractions be understood turgid language and misplaced ornaments, but not if we mean the constituents of a classical style. Demosthenes had had less force, if every word were not so arranged as to present his ideas in their strongest light, and every figure of speech were not natural as well as splendid. The Holy Bible itself, should teach us not to derogate from the importance of style. Does the manner in which the truths of Revelation are communicated, at all lessen their interest, or impair their force ? Yet where is rhetorical accuracy, purity and beauty more carefully observed, more strikingly displayed, than in the pages of Sacred Writ ? The literary study of the Bible, by refining our taste and quickening our sense of the beautiful, would inspire a distaste for false ornaments, and a disgust for vul-

garisms, while it would render our style better adapted to the comprehension of the uneducated.

It is of the last importance, therefore, not only that the mode of preaching which many of late years have adopted, should be corrected, but that the character of pulpit eloquence should be elevated. Zeal is important, but zeal cannot make amends for poverty of thought, feebleness of argument, and vulgarity of style. Zeal exhausts itself, and on what has the zealot to rely? Or the people become accustomed to its ebullitions, and how shall they be influenced? Hence it is, that zeal so often degenerates into acrimony and violence; or as an old divine expresses it, that "zeal, though a sweet Christian grace, is exceedingly apt to sour." Hence it is, also, that persons whose religion has been mere animal feeling, so often relapse into confirmed indifference, if not infidelity. Indeed, there is a closer connection between fanatical preaching, and the spread of infidelity, than we are ordinarily aware. The obvious tendency of such preaching, with its accompanying measures, will induce on many minds, the conclusion, that all changes in character may be explained independently of a divine agency. The familiarity with which the preacher treats divine things, the irreverence which he calls filial confidence and humble boldness, the absurd or ridiculous light in which he represents, in order to impart more plausibility to his own theories, some of the fundamental principles of the Bible, as held by orthodox Christians—his amusing anecdotes, his acting out his illustrations, as well as their vulgar character, his ridicule of opposers, his public and presumptuous exposures of dishonesty and hypocrisy among professing Christians, ostensibly made to promote the Church's purity—all tend, at once, to diminish respect for religion, to destroy confidence in Christian character, to divest the sanctuary of its sacredness and the Gospel of its spirit. By simply listening to some preachers whom curiosity had induced them to hear, we know that thinking, yet well principled minds, have, in some instances, been alienated from the house of God, and even tempted to doubt the truth of his religion. What, then, must be the effect of such preaching on minds sceptically disposed?

Though scepticism were never induced, from its exaggerated opinions, its defects in style, its virulence of manner, its tendency, is, to disgust the intelligence of the community.



Admitting that it never soars above the capacity of the lower, it invariably sinks below the regard of the higher classes; and hence it is, that few if any, well informed and judicious persons can be found in attendance on this preaching. Indeed, this new mode of preaching, we have reason to think, has served rather to swell the number of attendants on the Episcopal ministry, than even to multiply additions to our own communion from the lower classes.

But a preacher can be no model of pulpit eloquence, however well he may accommodate his sentiments and expressions to the one, if he wantonly, or even inadvertently disgust the other class. To be simple without flatness, delicate without finery, perspicuous without recurring to low idioms and vulgar similitudes, eminently behooves him, who is called to address a promiscuous audience. He alone deserves the name of a pulpit orator, who can speak with ease or dignity, fully or concisely, as the subject requires; whose language is at once the vehicle of thought, and the ornament of argument; who reaches the understanding through the passions, and while he enlightens the mind and impresses the heart, can secure the judgment of the wise, and delight the imagination of the tasteful.

We are not ignorant that the aversion of men of education and taste, from modern popular preaching, is very complacently attributed to the predominant influence of pride, and worldliness, and in some instances this may be the cause; but when a certain mode of preaching has no other effect on the superior classes than to repel, while it increases the attendance of the lower class, the reason must be found, not in the *enmity of the carnal heart*, but in the necessary repugnance of men of letters and refinement, to vulgarity and buffoonery; or of sober and discreet judgments, to a violation of that decency and order which should characterize, and to which they have been accustomed in the house of God.

But as we have already intimated, its effect on the common mind, may be simply to create excitement and multiply professions; to give distorted views of truth; to adulterate the motives of Christian action; to induce self-deception, if not hypocrisy, and in not unfrequent instances to insure apostasy. Whitefield's preaching was adapted to the common mind; but he preached the Gospel in humble reliance on God's Spirit, not his own expedients for rendering it inter-



esting to the crowd, nor his own measures for securing its immediate effects; and while converts multiplied, they *added to faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, godliness, and to godliness, charity.* Indeed, it may be reasonably doubted whether initiation to the Church, through the medium of excitement, be not directly calculated to create a distaste for the lowly virtues, and sober duties of religion.

To secure to the ministry that influence which it should exert, it is indispensable that their discourses should be of a high order both as respects their execution and delivery. Men of the world more frequently hear than read discourses on Scripture topics. Their respect, too, for Christianity, in a greater or less degree, is influenced by their impressions respecting the mental, as well as the moral qualifications of its ministers. This, is at once natural and unavoidable. As are our pulpit performances, such in general will be their intellectual regard for our religion; and such the human probability of its influencing their conduct in life,—in the same manner as the regard of the common mind for the constitution of a nation is shaped by the abilities and eloquence of its statesmen. If error be exclusively dependant for success on the intellectual power and address of its advocates, how much greater must necessarily be the force of truth, if the ministry bring to her service, all the requisites to convincing argumentation, and soul-subduing eloquence. As the protectress of Æneas thought him not altogether secure of the favour of the queen by his piety and bravery, but decorated him for the interview with preternatural beauty, so whoever would secure that influence which is indispensable to a preacher's success, must add grace to strength, and render his manner agreeable, as well as his subjects useful. Truth is prejudiced by illiterate preachers, as religion is divested of its beauty by fanatical excitements. One Gospel preacher of vigorous thought, cultivated taste, and correct elocution, such as Chalmers, Melvill,\* or Bradley;† and some whom we could mention from our own ranks, would exert a wider and more permanent influence over the sound sense and intelligence of the community

\* Vide, a volume of Sermons by Henry Melvill, B. D., Minister of Camden Chapel, Camberwell, and late fellow of St. Peter's College. Also, Sermons preached before the University of Cambridge. London. 1837.

† Vide, Sermons by Charles Bradley, Vicar of Glasbury and Minister of St. James' Church, Clapham, Surrey.

than a host of Revivalists. There might be no extraordinary means—but the regular services of the Sabbath would be felt. There might be no hundreds admitted at once to the Church, but ignorance would be enlightened, the vicious reformed, the sceptical convinced, the *Church built up on its most holy faith*, while religion, operating in private, would purify the heart, mould the temper, discipline households, regulate business, and sanctify the charities of life.

So, is a high order of preaching necessary to secure permanent interest in the ministrations of the Desk. No one can retain an audience, who merely deals in glittering and misplaced ornaments, or beats the air with the flourishes of a tumid, unmeaning rhetoric; however popular at first, his deficiency of real matter, of solid information, will ultimately consign his pulpit to contempt. No pastor can habitually extemporize without falling into a monotony of thought and expression; though he may be inventive and fluent; he will ultimately fail to interest. A mere extemporaneous preacher, might fill a Church in two years, but if he did not disperse his congregation in the next two, it would not be because they were desirous of growing in knowledge.

But no one can adopt our modern style of preaching and long retain his charge. A few years, would serve either to exhaust him, and dissatisfy his people; or to drive him to greater extremes, and consequently induce a separation. How many instances, in confirmation of this, might be adduced from the recent history of the Churches in divers places, but especially in the western part of the State of New-York. We think, also, that facts will sustain us in affirming that they who have retained prominent pulpits for more than a score of years, and secured a constantly growing respect for their ministrations, are the few, who, while they have persisted in their early habits of laborious study, have resisted the multiplication of evening meetings, the introduction of new measures, and kept aloof from all excitements.

If there be instances of large congregations where there is no adaptedness on the part of the pulpit to edification, it is to be attributed to adventitious circumstances. Hence, the importance which of late, in our cities, has been attached to the architectural style of the desk, to the convenient arrangement, and comfortable accommodation of the pews. We greatly fear, that were it not for the costliness and

splendour of some religious edifices, the merits of the preaching would not, in every instance, secure so large and regular an attendance. Let it not be thought that we object to magnificent temples: by no means. But let us not construe the influence of wealth and fashion, into a compliment to our pulpit eloquence. Let no one imagine that a new and costly place of worship can permanently make amends for good preaching. The influence of these things can be only temporary, unless fashion and worldliness have encroached on the piety and intelligence of a Church.

Nor is this high order of preaching less necessary to perpetuate one's influence after death, than to secure it while he is living. He is the greatest preacher whose sermons will act on future generations as they acted on the men of his own times; who though dead will speak in thoughts not less effective than his breathing words. That influence which depends on religious excitements, is as short lived, as these excitements are transient. Those discourses which excited the crowd, will not survive the remembrance of their hearers. Who can recall the desultory course of a fanatical sermon? Though they may have been written out by a stenographer, who will hereafter read them, unless it be to ascertain the form which Pelagian views, and religious enthusiasm assumed, at the time of their delivery. Melancholy monuments, of perverted truth and farcical piety, some of them may remain for years; but as regards any thing valuable in truth, forcible in thought, or sound in Christian experience, they are already but a single remove from oblivion. We know of no preachers whose discourses will live after them, but the few, whose preparation for the pulpit is as severe in maturity, as it was in their youth; who have cultivated style, as well as habits of thought; who, though their churches are not thronged, are always filled; whose ministry has permanently commanded the love of the pious, the reverence of the low, the respect of the high, and the interest of the intelligent.

We contend that the ministry should exert an intellectual, as well as a religious influence. In making provision for man as an immortal being, God has not withheld from us the means of intellectual culture. Hence, the mental character of Revelation,—the sublimity of its subjects, the simplicity of its style, the nobleness of its mysteries, the grandeur of its oratory, and the loveliness of its poetry.

How can the mind be brought in contact with the truths and principles of the Bible, without being at once enlarged and strengthened? What mental discipline can compare with a thorough course of biblical study? With such a field before him as the science of the divine will; with historical incidents so curious and interesting; with the elements of so noble a jurisprudence as that of Moses, and with the principles of so pure a system of ethics as that which Christ inculcated, it appears to us, that the preacher has the materials for exerting a far greater intellectual influence, than any lecturer on philosophical or literary subjects; and that where the preacher has availed himself of his advantages, there may be found far more thought and intelligence, than could result to the people from inducing their attendance on Atheneums, or their attention to the multiplicity of books for diffusing knowledge. If the enlargement and strengthening of the mind be just in proportion to the subjects which it is required to grasp and measure, then the "Bible, while the only book for the soul, is the best book for the intellect"—outweighing all the tomes of human wisdom. Shall its designed tendency be counteracted by the pulpit? Shall its high themes, and countless topics, and pure diction, be sacrificed to petty theory, monotonous common place, and vulgar language? While there is a more glorious sun and a purer dew, shall the culture of the understanding be left to mere earthly husbandmen? While reason has "a more majestic temple to tread, and more beauteous robes wherein to walk, and incense rarer and more fragrant to burn in golden censers," is she not degraded, when left to serve at the altars of human philosophy?

If, by adopting their language and modes of thought, we must let ourselves down to the people, then, preparation for the ministry is unnecessary. A classical and theological education is a serious impediment to our success. He will be the most popular as a preacher, who has simply, "a mark to himself, like an honest plain-dealing man." But a truce with irony. We have yet to learn, that the Christian ministry does not demand the greatest talents, the most profound and varied erudition; or that a man of education, the moment he opens his lips in public, should convince his audience, that he has neither a cultivated taste, nor a well disciplined mind. We have as little sympathy with the mode of manufacturing clergymen at an Oberlin, as with the way of ma-

king converts at a Chatham Chapel. "Men should not turn preachers, as the river Nile breeds frogs, when one half *moveth*, before the other is *made*, and while it is yet but *plain mud*."

As nothing, next to vice, derogates more from the dignity of the sacred profession, than ignorance and vulgarity in clergymen, so nothing is more injurious to the minds of the people, than the habit of receiving pleasure without any exertion of thought, or any effort of attention—by the mere excitement of curiosity and sensibility. Under such preaching the mind will be inflated, but it cannot be informed—the feelings will be enlisted, but the heart cannot be improved. There must necessarily be both ignorance of scriptural truth, and Christian experience; while the judgment of the hearer becomes more perverted, and his taste the more corrupt. Not so, when an educated ministry discloses from Sabbath to Sabbath, the results of profound study and literary pains—as might be illustrated in the case of an audience chiefly composed of New England peasants, contrasted with an audience composed of the working classes in a large city. Indeed, such is the general demand in our churches, for gratification and excitement, it may be said, it is not talent and education, that we want in the ministry, but a discerning public, to make good preachers. So long as the people are captivated by mountebank oratory, so long will there be but little pulpit eloquence.

#### REVIEW OF DAY ON THE WILL.

By REV. JOHN WOODBRIDGE, D. D.

"An enquiry respecting the self-determining power of the Will; or contingent volition. By Jeremiah Day, President of Yale College." "I think that the notion of liberty, consisting in a contingent self-determination of the will, as necessary to the morality of men's dispositions and actions, is almost inconceivably pernicious; and that the contrary truth is one of the most important truths of moral philosophy that ever was discussed, and most necessary to be known."  
—President Edwards, *New-Haven: Herrick & Noyes*, 1838.

THIS is, on the whole, a valuable book, exhibiting much of that perspicacity, for which the author is remarka-

ble, and displaying a kindness and equanimity of spirit, which are often affected, but too seldom actually found, in works of controversy. It is none the less excellent for its brevity; since it leaves no subject, on which it professes to treat, involved in unintentional, or studied obscurity, and settles many of the leading principles which it asserts, on an immovable foundation. In its definitions and arguments, we observe a clearness, simplicity and conclusiveness, worthy of the man, who has acquired no mean reputation as a student and teacher of the exact sciences, in the venerable institution with which he is connected. That we do not, indeed, regard the work as entirely faultless, we may have occasion to show in the course of our remarks; yet we certainly do assign it an important place, among the polemic and philosophical treatises, which have originated from the theological disagreements of the last few years.

We have not selected the title of the book as a motto, or as a mere introduction to independent discussions of our own; but we intend to follow our author through the principal topics of his essay, and to adorn our own pages with numerous quotations from his. We observe, in general, that he defends the leading doctrine of Edwards' unanswered and unanswerable treatise on the Will, in opposition to certain vague theories and loose speculations, which are propounded by their admirers, as an almost, if not wholly complete solution of all metaphysical difficulties, relating to the subjects of human activity, accountableness and dependence. While he arrays himself formally against no description of men, he aims to subvert the notion that contingency, or independence in our volitions, or mental acts, is possible, or necessary to free and responsible agency. He is very methodical; and not unfrequently, with a kind of Socratic pertinency and pith, he exhibits his arguments rather in the form of modest queries, than in the shape of dogmatical propositions, or logical inferences.

In his "Introductory observations," he says, "The self-determining power of the will is a subject which is intimately connected with many of the theological discussions of the present day." "President Edwards, in his treatise on the Will, has given a masterly exposition of the principal forms in which it is commonly presented." "The doctrine of his opponents was this, that the free acts of the will are not determined to be as they are, by any influence from

*without* the will itself. This was considered by him as involving the alternative, that every volition is determined either by a *preceding* volition, or by *nothing at all*. The latter is contingent self-determination. This appeared to him so obviously absurd, as not to call for a logical statement, expanded into the form of a regularly constructed demonstration. To the other branch of the alternative, he has done such ample justice, that the question concerning it may be considered as definitively settled. This may be one reason why the advocates of a self-determining power in the will, adhere so tenaciously to that form of the doctrine which implies contingency, as being the only ground left, on which they can hope to maintain their position."—pp. 10, 11.

Our author regards the question of self-determination as of great practical importance, especially in its relation to the *moral government of God*, as the adoption of the Arminian view of the subject involves the denial of the divine power to manage the affections and choices of moral agents, in entire subserviency to the counsels of infinite wisdom and goodness; and renders, moreover, the employment of any human means, for the suppression of vice, and the promotion of holiness, inappropriate, weak and useless. This necessary result of the doctrine of self-determination, is clearly and happily stated on pp. 11 and 12, to which we would refer those who have any doubts upon the subject. Nothing can be more absurd, than to address by *motives* a person, whose very nature is such that it cannot be *moved* by any thing without itself.

Many have spoken of being *conscious* of what is equivalent to a self-determining power in the will; and have, therefore, maintained that it should be assumed as a first principle in all our interpretations of Scripture. What else can be meant by Dr. Beecher, in the following passage, contained in his "Views of Theology?"

"It has been insisted by some, that, in looking for the ground of accountability, men never go beyond the fact itself of voluntariness. If the deed, whether good or evil, be voluntary, that satisfies. It does; but it is because all men include unfaithfully, both in *their theory and consciousness*, the supposition of powers of agency unhindered and uncoerced by any fatal necessity." Here, by the way, we cannot but observe how men whose philosophy involves a self-



determining power of the will, agree in the charges they prefer against orthodoxy. Thus Edwards was charged by a writer, whom Dr. West has noticed, with maintaining a doctrine which was "plainly on the side of fatality." But we return to Dr. Beecher. "Now I believe that the natural constitution, and universal feelings and perceptions of men," (*he must mean their feelings and perceptions, in respect to their unhindered and uncoerced powers of agency,*) "*are the voice of God speaking the truth* ; and if the truth is not here, where may we expect to find it ?" In other words, if Dr. Beecher's views of the nature of moral agency are not true, there is no truth, the knowledge of which can be attained by man ; and, consequently, the Bible may be safely (the sooner the better,) thrown to the moles and to the bats.

It is not improbable that President Day alludes to such bold language as that we have now quoted, when he says, "But here we are met with an assumption which precludes a reference to the decision of Scripture. It is claimed, that reason, and consciousness, and common sense, have already decided the point ; and that God cannot contradict, in his word, what he has distinctly made known to us, by the faculties which he himself has implanted in the soul. Whatever passages, therefore, which *seem* to favor a particular doctrine, may be found in the Scriptures ; they are to be so interpreted, as not to signify any thing which reason pronounces to be absurd. We are called upon, then, to inquire, whether the position, that nothing but the will itself has any influence in determining what its acts shall be, *is so intuitively or demonstrably certain*, as to preclude all possibility of finding the contrary declared in the word of God. So long as this position is adhered to, it is in vain to think of appealing to the authority of the Scriptures, on the question respecting a self-determining power of the will. They will, of course, be so explained, as to express a meaning in conformity with the principles assumed. This is my apology for making an application of dry metaphysics to a subject so nearly connected with one of the most important departments of Scriptural theology."—p. 13.

In the first section, he gives a definition of terms, and states a number of important preliminaries. "A CAUSE," he says, "in the more *extended* signification of the term, is as an ANTECEDENT on which something DEPENDS."

A writer in the February number of the Quarterly Christian Spectator, has singularly misapprehended our author's meaning. "The latitude thus given to the word cause," remarks the reviewer, "must be distinctly kept in view throughout the discussion, or the statements of Pres. Day will be liable to be misunderstood. When he speaks of a volition, for instance, as being *caused* or *produced*, or the will as *determined* by an external influence, he means simply, that the influence is an antecedent, 'on account' of which the volition is put forth." According to the reviewer, therefore, the President means by cause, not any effectual influence, but merely *causa sine qua non*, or the *occasion* of voluntary exercise; and, of course, he differs, in no essential respects, from most of the advocates of the self-determining power of the will, who allow that the mind chooses *in view* of motives, though its choices are *decided* by the sovereignty and omnipotence of its own will, independently of all foreign control or influence. On this assumption, he abandons, at the outset, the great principle, to sustain which his book was written. It is but right, however, that he should be permitted to speak for himself, in further explanation of his views.

"Between a cause and its effect, there is always the relation of antecedent and consequent. But antecedence is not the *only* element in the notion of a cause. There must also be *dependence*." "One thing *depends* on another, when the one exists on account of the other, and when, without the other or something equivalent, it would *not* exist. This implies, that there is that, in the nature and relation of the antecedent, which *secures* the existence of the consequent. It is what is called *efficacy*, in reference to the cause, and *dependence*, in reference to the effect. "A cause is that which not only is followed by its effect, but which *renders* the effect certain. It is not only an antecedent, but an *efficacious* antecedent." He quotes, with apparent approbation, a sentence from President Edwards, who says, in his treatise on the Will, Part II. sec. 8. "*Dependence* on the influence of a cause is the very *notion* of an effect."—pp. 22, 24.

We do not wonder that the reviewer is very careful to guard his readers against a misapprehension of President Day; if, after writing such sentences as the foregoing, he means by the cause of a volition, nothing more than "an

antecedent, on account of which the volition is put forth." Would it not, we humbly ask, have been more ingenuous in the reviewer, to have acknowledged his dissent from President Day, than claim an agreement with him, by softening down the natural import of his words, to suit the doctrines of the New-Haven school? Integrity is the brightest gem of a controversialist. Misrepresentation sinks him from the elevation of a dignified advocate of what he believes to be important truth, to the degrading attitude of a dishonest partizan and sophist.

Our author defines "power" to be "that, belonging to a cause, upon which the effects depend." The distinctions he makes on this subject, are in general clear and satisfactory; and worthy to be remembered by those, who would defend Christian doctrines, against the cavils, sophisms, and ambiguous phraseology of the opposers of the Gospel. In many a debate, definiteness of terms is more than half the strength of the argument. Ambiguity is the strong hold of error; and its dislodgment from this retreat, is the infallible signal of its overthrow.

With respect to the classification of the mental powers, he considers it as in a great measure arbitrary, and adopted for the sake of "convenient arrangement," in the investigation and discussion of the operations of the mind.

In his remarks on the will, he states the different uses of the term; but adopts no such formal division, as he is represented to adopt, by the aforesaid reviewer. The latter affirms, that President Day considers "emotions and affections" as "*voluntary* states of mind." The language may imply, that "the emotions and affections," so far as they have any moral character, are made what they are, by an act of choice; agreeably to the dogmas of certain preachers, who virtually tell sinners, not that affection and corresponding volition are necessarily contemporaneous, but that it is in their power to conquer their enmity to holiness itself by the violent onset of a cold, uninterested determination of the will, or, if any other impetus be needed, by the additional influence of innocent self-love, or the "constitutional desire of happiness." President Day maintains no such preposterous notion of moral agency. His words are, "In addition to both these classes of volitions, the New England divines, since the days of Edwards, at least, have very commonly considered *emotions or affections* as acts of the will." He

then quotes the elder Edwards, who says, "I humbly conceive, that the affections of the soul are not properly distinguished from the will; as though they were two faculties of the soul."—p. 39. The exercise of the affections, as love, desire and hatred, are considered by Edwards as volitions, or acts of the will; yet he was far from thinking, that they are neither virtuous nor vicious, except so far as they are subjected to the control of independent choices—a doctrine, which it was the prominent object of his Essay on the Will to subvert. But the reviewer has himself explained his motive for desiring to find in President Day, opinions which he never advanced. "Our readers are already familiar with this classification, which has been used in our discussions for many years. They are probably aware, too, that we have suffered some reproach on this account \* \* \* we have been stigmatized as heretics. We shall hope, under the shelter of President Day's authority, to escape any further reproach for the use of those terms." Indeed! President Day's name, then, is a sufficient security for the orthodoxy of any phrases, or modes of explaining philosophical subjects, which he may see fit to employ! But, to us, it looks rather suspicious, that other gentlemen connected with the same college with himself, should be so anxious to be found hanging on the skirts of his garments, that they may escape the imputation of heretical opinions and obliquity in their theological course. What will he do? Will he permit them to hide themselves in his shadow; or will he, by an explicit avowal of his disagreement from them, *shake them off*, and leave them to *take care of themselves*?

In the second section, President Day remarks, that "the real point of our inquiry" is not "whether the mind wills at all," nor "*why* we will at all," but "*why* we will *one way, rather than another*," &c. "What is it that determines not only that there shall *be* volitions, but what they shall be?"—p. 42.

He admits what none deny, that mankind are active in choosing, or that their choices are their own, under whatever influence they are excited to act; and that in this sense, they are the *authors* of their own volitions. "But this is not all that is ever meant by the advocates of a self-determining power of the will. The inquiry still recurs, what determines the man to will as he does? What determines him to determine thus? Is it a *preceding* act of the will?

This is undoubtedly the case in many instances. Taking the will in its more enlarged acceptation, as including not only *executive* acts, but *purposes* and emotions, acts of one class may be determined by those of another." Again, *present* acts may have an influence in determining *future* volitions, by placing us in circumstances fitted to excite certain classes of emotions." "In tracing back a series of acts, we may often find several successive steps *within* the mind. But *every* step cannot be dependent on another *within* the mind. For this would include the absurdity of at least *one* step before the *first*, or else of an *infinite* series of steps. The first act, then, must proceed from something within the mind, which is *not an act*, or from something *without*, or from both together, or from *nothing*. The last supposition implies absolute *contingence*."—[pp. 43, 44 & 45.]

In the following passage, the point in dispute is stated with great clearness:

"We are not inquiring whether a man has *any thing* to do, in determining the nature of his own acts of will, but whether they are wholly independent of *every thing else*—whether any other being, or event, or thing, can have any share of influence, in connection with his own agency, to render his volitions different from what they would otherwise be. The inquiry whether any thing exterior to the mind, is concerned in determining the *mind itself* to will in a particular way, is very different from the inquiry whether exterior influence determines the *volition*, without the agency of the mind." [p. 45.]

On pages 47–48, he clearly exposes the opinions of those who "speak of the power of willing, as being the sole and sufficient cause, why the mind wills one way, rather than another." "The mere power of willing, is not, of itself alone, even the reason why a man *wills at all*; unless the term power be used to include '*every* antecedent on which his willing depends. Is a man's power to walk, the only reason why he actually walks?"

In the latter part of this section, the absurdities involved in the "absolute contingency" of our volitions, or on the supposition that there is no cause of their being what they *are*, rather than otherwise, are made fully to appear. If "the agent" is not "uncaused," his volitions are remotely, though not immediately, dependent on something besides himself. He has not originated all the causes from which his choices

proceed. If it be said that the *nature* of his volitions depend on nothing but the nature of man, yet it is to be considered that this nature of his must have had an origin from some cause. Or if there be a *state* of the mind which is different from its nature and its operations, and which is the cause of its volitions, that state is not the product of chance."

—[p. 53.]

"We regret," says the reviewer in the *Spectator*, "that we cannot give the whole passage. Nothing can be more triumphant than the refutation it contains of this preposterous doctrine, and if there are any in this country who hold to contingent volition, they will find themselves the objects of general ridicule." If *there are any!* mark the conditional form of the expression, gentle reader. The reviewer intimates doubts upon the subject. He, charitable soul! seems to think it incredible, that any in this country should be so foolish as to "hold" the doctrine of "contingent volition." President Day, peradventure, may be engaged with true Quixotic zeal, in fighting a wind-mill, which he mistakes for the giant of heresy! While he thinks he is combatting error, which is actually defended by some among us, he may, perhaps, be grappling with a foe, that exists no where, save in his own alarmed and prolific imagination! If such be not the insinuation of the reviewer, what does he mean? Perhaps he intends to avoid a direct charge against his brethren, not because he believes it unwarranted, but from motives of delicacy, natural to a kind and gentle spirit, thinking that those for whom President Day's strictures are designed, will be ready to make the necessary application, without the aid of the reviewer.

At all events, it is desirable to know whether the President of Yale College, with his cool judgment, and ample opportunities for observation, has entered the lists against a phantom, or at least, an entity of some remote land, or distant age.

We will introduce to our readers a few quotations from the *Christian Spectator*, on the meaning of which, they can judge for themselves.

"It will not be denied that free moral agents *can* do wrong under every possible influence to prevent it. The *possibility* of a contradiction in supposing them to be prevented from doing wrong is, therefore, demonstrably certain. Free moral agents can do wrong, under all possible preventing influence."—Ch. Spec. 1830, p. 563.



What is this but saying, that free moral agents can do wrong, *against*, or *without*, any influence, cause, or motive whatever? And what is necessary to render a "volition" "contingent," if the act of a creature, taking place without any influence, cause, or motive, is not of this character?

"But this possibility that moral agents will sin, remains, (suppose what else you will,) so long as moral agency remains; and how can it be proved that a thing *will not* be, when for ought that appears it *may* be? When in view of all the facts and evidence in the case, it remains true that it *may* be, what evidence or proof can exist that it *will not* be."—Ch. Spec. 1830, p. 563.

If nothing can restrain moral agents from sinning, so long as they continue to *be* moral agents, then clearly it is necessary to moral agency that creatures should be able to will without any determining motive, or that their volitions should be uncaused, or "contingent."

"We know that a moral system necessarily implies the existence of free agents, with the power to act in despite of all opposing power. This fact sets human reason at defiance, in every attempt to prove that some of these agents will not use that power and actually sin."—Ch. Spec. 1831, p. 617.

It seems, then, that "human reason" is set "at defiance, in every attempt to prove that" the volitions of free agents are not contingent.

"It is here to be remarked that the prevention of sin by any influence that destroys the power to sin, destroys moral agency. Moral agents then must possess the *power to sin*. Who can prove *a priori*, or from the nature of the subject, that a being who can sin, will not sin? How can it be proved *a priori*, or from the nature of the subject, that a thing *will not* be, when for ought that appears, it may *may* be?" Dr. Taylor's *Concio ad Clerum*.

In Dr. Taylor's view, therefore, the power of "contingent volition," or the ability to choose one way rather than another, without any cause, and against every determining influence, may be essential to the liberty of a rational and accountable being.

That some "in this country" do or did "hold to contingent volition," is, therefore, undeniable; and President Day is not to be accused of "so fighting as one that beateth the air." The authors of the articles, from which the foregoing quota-



tions are taken, will, of course, according to the reviewer, "find themselves the objects of general ridicule."

"President Day," says the reviewer, "gives no sanction to what Dr. Emmons has been supposed to hold on this subject, viz: that our acts of choice are also acts of divine power." By whom has Dr. Emmons been supposed to hold that our acts of choice are God's acts, or the appropriate operations of the divine mind; thus identifying us with the Deity? Does not Dr. Emmons believe that creatures have a real and distinct *personal existence*? If the reviewer mean, that Dr. Emmons is supposed to maintain, that even voluntary exercises, while they are strictly our own, may be produced in us, in consequence of some exertion of divine power on our minds, securing the agency which we actually put forth; it is undoubtedly true, that such is the opinion of Dr. Emmons; and we may add also, of every other man, who does not hold that human choices are the result of a fortuitous, or mechanical operation of the human will. At any rate, this is most assuredly the opinion of President Day. Our readers are requested to note the following sentences, as decisive on the point.

"Absolute contingency is incompatible with the influence of any cause. But God is said to *cause* his people to do his will." "He is said to *incline* their hearts to obey him."—"It is true, that in many instances, God, in his displeasure, leaves men to *themselves*." "He withholds from them the sanctifying influence of his Spirit. But this, so far from being a *privilege* belonging to them as moral agents, is a dire calamity, a judgment of heaven for their iniquities."—pp. 181, 182, 183. "The work of God, changing the heart from sin to righteousness, is represented as the exercise of *creative power*," p. 186. "Not that the agency of God in renewing the heart, is identified with the agency of men; but one is the *consequence* of the other, is *dependent* on the other. *His* turning is not *their* turning. Their obedience is not His obedience. His giving them repentance is not their repentance. But without His agency, they would not repent." "His working in them, to will and to do, is not their working; but it is *rendering* them willing to work out their own salvation," p. 189. We merely add, that it is very unreasonable to confound, in any instance, the effects of God's power, with the acts of his mind. All creatures flow forth from him, as the great fountain of being; yet they are not part of the Deity, nor are their movements identical

with his. His will is the cause of the virtuous will of the subjects of his moral government; but it is not that will itself.

The "influence of motives" is the subject of the third section. These President Day divides into internal and external motives. External, are objects without the mind; internal, are those interior affections, or volitions, by which the mind is excited to yield to the influence of outward motives. The doctrine of motives supposes some influence, determining the acts of the will. "If volitions are entirely *contingent*; if they are independent of every thing preceding, for being as they are, then it is idle to talk of motives at all, using the term in its common acceptation. In this sense, there *are* no motives; though there must be *objects* of choice before the mind, to give it an *opportunity* of choosing between them. Without these, there would not be even a *chance* for volition. But objects of choice, according to the supposition, have no tendency to turn the decision of the mind in favor of one rather than another. They may move the will to volition in the abstract, but not to the choice of any particular thing. If a man prefers a bed of down to a bed of thorns, it is a mere accident; or because the will, in the plenitude of its sovereign power, takes that decision.—It is not because the down has any *influence* on his decision."—pp. 58, 59. It has occurred to us that President Day, here might have had in his eye certain notions, said to be taught by a theological professor somewhere in New England, concerning the sovereignty of our choices, as following "the rational estimate" or "the passionate estimate," both of which are supposed to be distinctly in the view of the mind. In reply to the question, "are motives the *efficient* cause of volition?" our author's remarks are just and discriminating. His conclusion is, "still, it may be true, that the mind, or minds in every respect alike, in precisely the same state, in the same circumstances, and under the same influence of every kind, will certainly choose in the same way," p. 62. "If it be still urged, that the will may decide against the strongest influence, without any reason whatever; that it will sometimes comply with motives, and sometimes resist them, and that, without any motive for resisting; then we are brought back again to all-powerful contingency, to the uncontrollable supremacy of non-entity. p. 67.

In the fourth section, he treats the much controverted subject of liberty and necessity. He very satisfactorily ex-

poses the absurdity that liberty signifies, "not our *doing* as we will, but our *willing* as we will."

His remarks on a man's power to will the contrary of what he actually wills," are judicious and unanswerable. We will quote a few of them.

"If the word power be used in its broadest sense, as including, not only opportunity, knowledge, capacity, &c., but *motives of all kinds*, it is *not* true, that a man has always equal power, that is, equal inducements to opposite volitions. Has an honest man the same inducement to lie, which he has to speak the truth?" p. 79. "The man who wills in a particular way, under the influence of certain feelings, might undoubtedly will differently, *under a different influence*. But while the same mind continues in precisely the same state, in the same circumstances, and under the same influence of every kind, has it power to will in opposite directions; or if it has this power, will it ever use it?" p. 80. "Will it be said, that our volitions are *partly* contingent, and partly dependent on something preceding—that there may be *some* influence from motives, and at the same time a power of acting in opposition to motives? To this it may be answered, that if the very nature of liberty of will, implies freedom to either side, then so far as this is controlled, and our volitions are determined by the influence of motives, by the state of the affections, or by any thing else, liberty is impaired. The saint in heaven, who is under the influence of such motives, as invariably excite in him holy volition, has not the liberty of which we are now speaking. Contingence and dependence, are incompatible with each other. So far as one prevails, the other can have no place." p. 85.

On the same subject, he says, sect. 6. "But what is necessary to render a man accountable for *acts of the will itself*? They must, unquestionably, be his *own* acts, and not those of another. He must be the agent, the person who wills? In this sense his volitions are self-determined. And if he actually wills, he certainly has power to will. But must he not also have the power to *will the contrary*? Now what can this inquiry mean? Power over an action, implies some antecedent or antecedents, on which the action depends. Volitions, if they depend upon any thing besides the agent himself, must depend on his feelings, his affections, his disposition, his apprehension. When it is affirmed that an accountable agent must have power to will in opposite

directions, are we to understand the meaning to be, that he has *equal* power to either side, or only that he has *some* power to the contrary? If the latter only be intended, there is no difficulty in seeing that the *balance* of feeling may be so decisively on one side, as to control the man's volitions. Is it necessary to accountable agency, that the feelings for and against the decision of the will should be *equal*? Is the murderer free from guilt, unless he has as strong an inclination to spare his victim, as to take his life? Is the sinner excusable for his impenitence, unless he has an equal disposition to obey God, and to disobey him? Are the angels in heaven deserving of no praise for their constancy, unless they have an equal propensity to revolt? Is Washington entitled to no credit for giving freedom to his country, unless it can be proved that he was equally inclined to betray it? Will it be said, that although our feelings may be all one side, or much stronger on one side than the other, yet that this does not determine what our volitions will be? How then, from a man's conduct can any opinion be formed of his feelings? How does it appear that Judas had not as sincere an attachment to his master, as Peter or John? Why may we not ascribe his treachery to a power of willing and acting contrary to his disposition?" pp. 115, 116, 117.

After reading the above, who can help wondering at the intimation of the reviewer in the Spectator, that Dr. Beecher's views on the subject of moral agency, accord with those of President Day? Let the words of these two writers be placed side by side.

## DR. BEECHER.

"If you deny to mind this alternative power, if you insist, that by a constitution anterior to choice, of the nature of a natural cause to its effect, the choice which takes place, can come, and cannot but come into being, and that none other but this can possibly exist, you have as perfect a fatality of choice, as ever Pagan, or Atheist, or Antinomian conceived."

## PRESIDENT DAY.

"It may be thought by some, that by a *purpose*, or *resolve*, we have power to give our volitions a contrary direction. But do we form purposes independently of all motives, from within and from without? Will the same influence operating upon precisely the same state of mind, lead to opposite purposes and volitions? Does the state of the mind itself become contrary to what it was before, without any cause whatever?"

Dr. Beecher here expresses himself in the same manner with the great body of the opposers of the divine decrees. We find the recognition of no distinction, between *physical* and *moral* ability, necessity, or causation. What he means by the "nature of a natural cause," seems to be a cause which infallibly and efficiently secures its effect.

The reviewer also intimates, that Dr. Beecher's opinion of the subject, is the same with that of the Elder Edwards and his son. Let us see then, how these great men express themselves.

ELDER EDWARDS.

"Moral necessity may be as *absolute* as natural necessity; that is, the effect may be as perfectly connected with its moral cause, as a natural necessary effect is with its natural cause. As it must be allowed, that there may be such a thing as a *sure* and *perfect* connection between moral causes and their effects; so *this only* is what I call by the name of moral necessity."

JUNIOR EDWARDS.

"It has been inquired concerning President Edwards' moral inability, whether the man who is the subject of it, *can remove it*? I answer yes, he has the *physical* power to remove it, and to do the action which he is *morally unable* to do. Moral necessity is the real and certain connection between some moral action and its cause; and there is no moral necessity in the case, unless the connection be real and *absolutely certain*, so as to *insure* the existence of the action."

These eminent writers, therefore, while they asserted the *natural* power in men to choose contrary to their actual choice, denied their possession of any *moral* power for this purpose. In all their writings, we find nothing which resembles, in manner, spirit, or doctrine, the foregoing extract from Dr. Beecher.

In no case, perhaps, has the ambiguity of long usage, given rise to more evasion, than in the use of the term necessity, in its relation to the subject of human liberty. While some have insisted, that the term itself, as used by Edwards, means fatalism, physical coercion, or any thing else which is repulsive to the dictates of conscience and common sense, (*monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens cui lumen ademptum*!) others have labored to divest it of all important meaning, or have represented it as employed to

denote the incongruous and self-contradictory doctrine of the *certainty* of *uncaused*, or what is the same thing, *contingent* or *uncertain* volitions. In other words, the "necessity" of the New England divines of the last generation, is to be understood as the doctrine of an *uncaused effect*, or an *uncertain certainty*! Thus the reviewer puts Samuel Clarke, the Arminian, Jonathan Edwards, and President Day, in the same predicament as it regards the meaning they attach to the phrases philosophical or moral necessity. Is not the inference then, clear, that after all Edwards' zealous efforts in opposing the Arminians, he actually, if he had understood himself, aimed at nothing but the establishment of those very positions which he professed to controvert.\*

But does not Edwards say that that which is called *moral necessity*, is called by the name of necessity improperly? He does; yet he constantly asserts as infallible a connection between causes and moral effects, as between causes and effects which are purely natural. In this view of the subject, President Day most manifestly agrees with Edwards. The remarks of the former, which we regret we have not room to quote, in the paragraph beginning at the top of page 91, we would particularly recommend to those whose "argument from necessity, in favor of contingent self-determination, is a play upon the ambiguity of terms."

In most of the remarks in the fifth section, we readily concur, and we see in every page, evidence of that power of accurate discrimination, for which the President has long been celebrated. It is refreshing to turn to another who *instructs* us, after having been perplexed and confounded amidst the loose generalizations, or *inconsequential* deductions of sciolists in the art of reasoning, or of dishonest sophists, resolved at all events, to hold the position they have assumed. The reviewer, under this part of the subject, introduces speculations, of which we find no trace in President Day, which admit of an interpretation at variance from the general tenor of his argument; and which we regard as absolutely inconsistent with the current opinions of those who maintain the *reality* of *moral* inability to holiness in unre-

\* We have been told that Dr. Taylor, of New Haven, represents the old Arminian advocates of the self-determining power of the will, as *aiming at the truth*, and we lately heard one of the admirers of Dr. Taylor predict, that *fifty years hence*, Edwards would be far less esteemed as a reasoner, than he is at present. We understood the gentleman to mean, that the twinkling of this luminary of an obscure New England village, would be lost in the overpowering brightness of the New Haven improvements in theology.



newed men, or the fact of the entire moral corruption of our fallen race. "The mind," says the reviewer, "must have susceptibilities which render the external object an *inducement* or motive to choice. If then, a being were required to choose God as his portion, who had no susceptibilities, nothing in the constitution of his mind, suited to make the character of God a *motive* to such a choice, he would be *naturally* unable so to choose. He must plainly have a new attribute of his nature given him, and until this is done, he is unable to choose God, in precisely the same sense that he is unable to fly, or to create a world."

What does the reviewer mean by a "susceptibility" to "choose," that is, (as we understand the term,) to *love* God? Does he mean simply, the possession of those natural faculties, without which there can be no moral affections in the soul? Why use such strange and ambiguous language, to express a truth which no one denies? Does he mean that "constitutional desire of happiness," which, according to the philosophy of certain gentlemen, is the spring of all moral affections and volitions, in all worlds? God's complaint by the prophet, however, was "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto *himself*." No great value is here attached to that "self-love, or desire of happiness," which a writer in the *Christian Spectator* of 1829, p. 21, says, "is the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference or choice, which supremely fix on an object." The apostle too, instead of paying a compliment to this "constitutional desire of happiness," classes "lovers of their own selves" with some of the most unprincipled and profligate of mankind. The Saviour assures us, that, as publicans and sinners, the worst of men salute their brethren, and love those who love them; our imitation of them, in this respect, can afford us no evidence that we are possessed of a single principle of true virtue, or can perform an act pleasing to God.

Does the reviewer mean, by "susceptibilities, suited to make the character of God a motive" to the "choice" of him as a "portion," something in the heart itself, or the state of the moral affections? Is there, then, a predisposition in mankind, while unrenewed, to love the true character of God? They are called God's enemies; and it is affirmed of such of them, as enjoy the faithful instructions of the Gospel, that they have "both *seen* and *hated* both Christ and his Father." A predisposition in the *enemies*, in the

*haters* of the true God, to love him, to submit to him, to embrace him as their Father and portion ! What philosophy is this ! Mankind are declared to be dead in trespasses and sins ; and does death generate life ? Is there something in the *holiness* of the divine character, adapted to excite love in the soul altogether unholy ? Is selfishness the parent of disinterestedness ? enmity, of cordial reconciliation ? pollution, of purity ? darkness, of light ? The lower class of Arminians have agreed with the reviewer, in the opinion, that, in order to liberty and responsibility, "the mind must have susceptibilities which render the external object an *inducement* or motive to choice ;" and hence they have insisted on the existence of certain remnants of holiness, principles of moral virtue, or sparks of love to God, in the bosom of every child of Adam. Is such the meaning of the reviewer ? We can understand him, then ; but let him not, in this case, continue to use orthodox phrases, concerning man's moral depravity, and the method of recovery by grace. *Total* depravity surely implies the absence of all those materials, either seminally or in visible fruit, which constitute the elements of evangelical goodness. If we have not been able to conjecture his meaning, (and we confess ourselves to be not a little in the dark,) we hope he will condescend, in some future number of the Spectator, to define his terms in such a manner, as to leave us no longer in doubt upon the subject. For our part, we do not believe that the possession of holiness, or a *moral* "susceptibility" to holiness, is necessary, to render men proper subjects of moral government, praise, or blame. We do not believe that unregenerate man "has within him the" *moral* "capacity of being moved by the character of God to the choice" of God "as a portion ;" for to say that he has, is, in our opinion, but contradictory, in the other words, to the doctrine of man's entire moral corruption and ruin.

The phrase "natural ability," is often used in a very vague sense ; and is made to teach positive error. On this subject, President Day has some just and important remarks. "The liability to misapprehension respecting the meaning of moral inability is increased, when it is contrasted, as it commonly is, with *natural* inability ; apparently implying that moral inability is not natural to man ; that his unwillingness to do his duty, does not proceed from any thing belonging to his *nature*. This is far from being in-

tended, however, by those divines who most frequently make the distinction of which we are speaking."—p. 107. "With some writers, the distinction between natural and moral inability appears to be this; that the former will *certainly* prevent particular actions, while the latter interposes such a difficulty merely as will *probably* prevent them. And when they hear it asserted by others, that there is no natural inability in the way of a sinner's repenting and doing his duty; they understand the meaning to be, that there is nothing, arising from his nature, and the nature of things around him, which, without the renewing grace of God, will certainly prevent him from repenting and obeying."—p. 108.

In the sixth section, President Day refutes the doctrine, "that we are *conscious* of a self-determining power in the will." Even Dr. Reid, who zealously defends self-determination, says, "Power is not an operation of the mind, and therefore is *no object of consciousness*. Indeed, every operation of the mind, is the *exertion* of some power of the mind; but we are conscious of the *operation only*, and the power lies behind the scene. And though we may justly *infer* the power from the operation, it must be remembered, that inferring is not the province of consciousness, but of reason." With respect to an external influence, determining our volitions, President Day shows, that we cannot be conscious of the contrary; since the operations of our own minds, and not their causes, are the objects to which our consciousness extends. "There are," says the reviewer, "remarks in this section which a careless reader might understand as denying, what he had previously affirmed, that man has power to the contrary in the sense of natural ability." But where, we ask, can the *careful* reader find in President Day's book, that doctrine of "power to the contrary," which has been taught by the Arminians, by Dr. Beecher, and by some of the most voluminous contributors to the pages of the Christian Spectator? We quote the concluding sentences of this section. "It is sometimes said that man is not accountable for acts which he does not himself *originate*. Every man does originate all his volitions, in this sense, that they are *his* acts, and not the acts of another, that they begin with him, that they do not exist before he puts them forth. But does this imply, that nothing can have any influence to induce him to originate them?"—p. 119.

In the seventh section, President Day refers us to the decision of common sense on the subject of self-determination. He shows the indefiniteness of the phrase, "common sense," and quotes with approbation the following passage from Edwards, "There is a grand illusion in the pretended demonstration of Arminians from *common sense*. The main strength of all these demonstrations lies in the prejudice that arises, through the insensible change of the use and meaning of such terms as *liberty*, *able*, *unable*, *necessary*, *impossible*, *unavoidable*, *invincible*, *action*, &c., from their original and vulgar sense, to a *metaphysical* sense entirely diverse." Common sense decides, that a man is free, when he does as he will, without looking back to the cause of his volitions. While it teaches, that motives do not choose and act of themselves, without an agent, it at the same time admits the necessity of motives, and their influence in determining our choices. While it allows, that some kind of *power* is implied in obligation to obedience, it attaches the idea of the greatest blameworthiness to that *inability* which consists in utter unwillingness, or disinclination. The notion of government by law, indeed, supposes that our choices are not contingent, or self-determined.

In the eighth section, President Day obviates certain objections, derived from the terms "mechanical and physical," against the doctrine of the dependence of our volitions on motives, or on any preceding cause. It is not necessary to suppose that the will is a machine, because it resembles one in some respects. Like a machine, it may have a real existence—may have been created—may be dependent for its movements on some foreign cause—and yet be far superior, in its nature and operations, to any piece of material mechanism. "The human understanding is unavoidably affected, by the objects in the world around it. Is it, for this reason, a mere machine? Is every thing which is like another in *any* respect, to be called by the same name? Is man an elephant, because both have the faculties of hearing and seeing? Is the human mind a watch or a clock, because its volitions succeed each other, like the beats of a time piece?"—p. 130.

It has often been alleged, that the doctrine of dependent volition cannot be true, because it includes the idea of *physical* agency in determining our mental exercises. The word "*physical*" is very indeterminate in its meaning; and

is therefore, very convenient for those, who would employ a term to signify "one thing or another, any thing or nothing, as occasion may require." If by the word physical be meant material, it is doubtless true, that, in this sense, the will is not controlled by a physical influence. Who supposes, that the will can be shaped by the axe, smoothed by the plane, or propelled by the forcing-pump, or by steam? If the word be used, to signify causation we ask, with our author, "Because material phenomena have their causes, does it follow that volition has *no* cause?" If the word be used to denote "the *certain* connection between cause and effect, "it is sufficient to say, that the predictions and promises of the Bible suppose such a connection; and that, on any different hypothesis, there is, and can be no security for the final perseverance in holiness of any of the inhabitants of heaven. The word certainty itself is often used in an ambiguous sense; meaning either a real certainty, or a strong probability. "There is a certainty of *knowledge*, and also a certainty in the nature and relations of *things*, which is the foundation of certain knowledge." "Certain knowledge of any truth implies, that it *is* a certain truth. It is certainly known, *because* it is certainly true. Some metaphysicians maintain, that volitions which are neither certain in themselves, nor certainly dependent on any thing preceding, but wholly contingent, may, nevertheless, be certainly foreknown. President Edwards was of a different opinion." "He is so far from admitting, that that which is uncertain in itself, can be certainly foreknown, even by the Divine mind, that he has entered into an extended argument to prove, that no future event can be certainly foreknown, whose existence is contingent."—pp. 136, 137.

Our author attaches no more importance than we do, to the liberal and indefinite use of such terms, as "necessary cause, physical efficiency, fatal necessity, originating volition, efficient cause, irresistible influence," &c., in supporting the doctrine of self-determination, or independent choices of the mind. "The whole subject of the freedom of the will, may be easily thrown into utter confusion, by a liberal use of a few ambiguous words and phrases."—p. 139.

The subject of the ninth section, is the moral government of God. In this, our author shows, that the self-determining power of the will, instead of being implied in the divine legislation over minds, is inconsistent with the very notion

of law, rewards and punishments. Why seek, by precepts and sanctions, to govern a power, which, from its very nature, is necessarily above all extraneous influence? As to the objection to the common Calvinistic view of the divine agency, that it makes God the author of sin, President Day maintains that it lies, with equal force, against the fact, admitted by Pelagians, that the Most High gave "to man the nature, from which contingent volitions proceed. Did not the author of our being *foresee* that, with such a nature as he gave us, and in such a world as that in which he placed us, we should not only be liable to sin, but should actually sin?"—p. 150.

On the reasons of the divine permission of sin, our author suggests a theory, which does not, in our view, fully meet the Scriptural statements of the subject, nor have any proper relation to the philosophy of dependence and human agency, as taught by himself in other parts of his volume. When, for example, he asks, pp. 152, 153, "Can no intermediate supposition be made?" "May it not be true, that the measures necessary to prevent all sin, would involve such a change in this system of means as would *impair the happiness* of the universe?" And then says, in the next sentence, "This supposition does not necessarily imply, that *sin itself* is one of the means of the greatest good;" we find it difficult, we confess, to see the consistency of this, with what he elsewhere and habitually teaches concerning the compatibility of freedom with the unlimited control of God over the acts of the mind. That the Deity does not choose sin on its own account, is doubtless true, because it is infinitely contrary to his nature; but does it, therefore, follow, that he may not choose it, in all instances of its occurrence, for the *occasion* it will afford him of doing good to his intelligent creation, and glorifying his own perfections? Was it true, in the case of the sin of Joseph's brethren, that the reason God did not prevent it was, that "the measures necessary" to its prevention, would have involved "such a change in the system of means, as would have impaired the happiness of the universe?" We are, on the contrary, expressly told, that while they "*thought evil* against" their brother, "God *meant* unto good." Was not Jesus Christ delivered to be crucified, by the hands of wicked men, in consequence of the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; and was not the crucifixion of the



Messiah, as an atoning sacrifice, in accordance with innumerable predictions and promises, "one of the means of the greatest good?" Did not God choose the death of Christ *itself*, and the *kind* of death he suffered; or, was this event contingent, or the accidental result of circumstances, which the Deity had proposed for a different design? The *specific intention* of God in this matter is taught most clearly in Matt. xxvi. 24; Luke xxii. 22, 37; xxiv. 44—46; John xix. 31—37; Acts ii. 23; iii. 18; iv. 26—28; xiii. 27; and in the general scope of the Old Testament prophecies. The apostle tells us, that God created the world by Jesus Christ, with the design of making "known his *manifest wisdom*," "to the principalities and powers, in heavenly places," by means of his ransomed "church," Eph. iii. 10. But the existence of the church presupposes the existence of sin. The existence of sin, therefore, was essentially included in that wise and benevolent scheme, in accordance with which God "created" the heavens and the earth. The psalmist, moreover, assures us—and we are to regard his declaration as referring to a general principle of the divine government—that *the wrath of man shall praise the Lord, and that the remainder of wrath he will restrain*. What meaning can we attach to this passage, if it is not true, that "the wrath of man," "*the sin itself*" is "made "one of the means of the greatest good?" Many of the most popular objections\* to this doctrine, our author has himself virtually answered, in his replies to the objections of the advocates of a self-determining power, against the system of moral agency, which he has undertaken to sustain.

He does not, however, "consider sin (as to its prevention by God) to be merely *incidental* to the best possible system," in the sense in which this language is understood by the New-Haven divines; for in this section, as well as elsewhere, he most unequivocally repudiates the notion, that the Most High cannot prevent the existence of sin, without

\* In reference to the objection, that, according to our doctrine, God *does evil* that good may come, it is sufficient to say, that as the Head of the universe, he has rights which we have not. He, for example, has a right to destroy life, which we have not. Will we say, that, when he sends an earthquake to swallow up a city, and destroy all its inhabitants, he *does evil* that good may come? It is not *doing evil* for God to ordain events in such a manner, as to secure the greatest good of his moral kingdom. The great law of love which makes it our duty to obey him in *all things*, disposes him to do whatever he sees will be most honorable to himself, and most happy for those who delight in the brightest manifestations of his glory.

destroying or suspending the moral agency of his accountable creatures.

"Does not the existence of sin imply a *limit* either to his *power* or to his *goodness* ?

"This difficulty does not press exclusively upon the opinion, that volitions are dependent upon something preceding, for being what they are. Let it be supposed, that they are contingent. It is generally admitted, by those who believe that this is the case, that they are *foreseen* by God. Why, then, does he give existence to beings who he knows will sin; and that many of them will so sin, that it would have been good for them, if they had never been born? Will it be said, that he could not avoid bringing them into being, *consistently with the best good of the universe*? And how do we know, even supposing that the volitions of creatures are under his control, that he could interpose to prevent all sin, *in a way* consistent with the best good of the universe? Do you say, that if he could not, it must be because he could not prevent all sin *without destroying moral agency*? Is the destroying of moral agency the *only* evil which could possibly result from deranging the plans of infinite wisdom and benevolence? If it be admitted, that all sin cannot be prevented, in the *best* moral system; does it follow, that it could not be prevented in *any* moral system?"—pp. 151, 152.

Let the reader compare the foregoing, and, indeed, the general course of reasoning in the book, with the language of certain individuals of high standing among the New-Haven divines.

"It is a groundless assumption, that God could have prevented all sin, or at least, the present degree of sin in a moral system."—[Dr. Taylor's *Clonio ad Clerum*.]

"Who does most reverence to God, he who supposes that God *would* have prevented all sin, in his moral universe, but *could not*; or he who affirms, that he *could* have prevented it, but *would not*?"—[*Ib.*]

"It is here to be remarked that the prevention of sin by any influence that destroys the power to sin, destroys moral agency. Moral agents then must possess the *power to sin*. Who then can prove *a priori*, or from the nature of the subject, that a being who can sin, will not sin?"—[*Ib.*]

"The assumption, therefore, that God could in a moral system, have prevented all sin, or the present degree of sin, is

wholly gratuitous and unauthorized, and *ought never to be made the basis of an objection or an argument.*"—[Ib.]

"When, therefore, God could, if he would, have made a universe of perfectly holy and happy beings, he preferred, decreed"—(*the reader will please to recollect that the editors of the Christian Spectator insist that it is a slander to deny that they are bona fide Calvinists*)—"and made one comprising sin and its everlasting miseries? We ask, is this goodness?"—[Ch. Spectator, 1832, p. 498.]

The tenth section is on the subject of "activity and dependence," the purport of which the reviewer does not seem fully to understand. "President Day," he says, "shows that the dependence of volitions upon motives, does not in the least impair the activity of man, as the sole agent in volition. This dependence, it should be remembered, consists simply in the fact, that if we choose, there must be something to be chosen—something having the character of an *inducement* to the choice made." "All the dependence of the will on motives, for which the President contends, is of the kind here described. It consists in the fact, that a perfect and complete *agent*, the sole originator of his own actions, cannot, in the nature of things, choose except as there is something to be chosen, which has the character of an inducement." The fact, however, is, that the President maintains, that our choices may be decisively *caused* by an internal influence, or "inducement," without the loss, or diminution of our liberty.

"It has been said, that a man cannot be a free agent, if he is a mere passive recipient of influence from without.—This is very true. If he is *merely* passive, he is no agent at all. If he is merely passive, he is not active, and therefore does not act. But what absurdity is there in supposing, that he may be active and passive too; active in willing, passive in being caused to will? If a thing is caused to be active, does it follow, that is *not* active; that it is *merely* passive? If a man is *made* willing to act in a certain way, does this prove, that he is *not* willing? Is it urged, that to suppose a man to be caused to act freely is inconsistent with the definition of free agency? Would it not be more to the purpose, to endeavor to render our definitions conformable to the nature of things; rather than to take it for granted, that facts correspond with our arbitrary definitions? Dr. Reid appears to suppose, that that which is *acted upon*, can-

not act. Would he say, that the water-wheel cannot act, when it is acted upon by the stream?" pp. 164, 165.

In view of these statements, the reader must judge, whether President Day means nothing more, than he is represented to mean by the reviewer, merely, "that a perfect and complete *agent*, the sole originator of his actions, cannot, in the nature of things, choose except as there is something to be chosen, which has the character of an inducement."

The reviewer thinks that "it is unnecessary to dwell" upon the "brief section on fatalism and pantheism;"\* thus very conveniently omitting some remarks of our author, which obviate objections frequently made against orthodoxy, as involving the errors of these systems of speculative philosophy. We will quote a few sentences from President Day, on the subject. "Cousin says, 'the theory of Locke concerning freedom tended to fatalism.' This calling in the aid of an odious appellation, is a very convenient and summary mode of confuting an opponent. It has a special advantage, when the name which is substituted for argument, is so indefinite and mysterious, that the reader is in no danger of discovering its meaning. Fatalism is commonly understood to be something heathenish. But it has assumed such a diversity of forms, the Astrological, the Platonic, the Stoical, the Manichean, and the Mahomedan fatality, that it is sufficiently unintelligible to answer the purpose of an argument, which is most efficacious when least understood." "Whatever was meant by the *Fatalism* of the ancients, it did not imply, that all the changes in the world are under the guidance of a *being of infinite wisdom and infinite goodness*. This was so far from being the case, that the *Gods themselves* were represented by the doctrine, as being

\* "As to the notion of *fatality*, which the author lays also to my charge, this is another ambiguity. There is a *fatum mahometanum*, a *factum stoicum*, and a *fatum christianum*. The Turkish *fate* will have an effect to happen, even though its cause should be avoided; as if there was an *absolute necessity*. The Stoical *fate* will have a man to be quiet, because he must have patience, whether he will or not, since it is impossible to resist the course of things. But it is agreed that there is a *fatum christianum*, a certain destiny of every thing, regulated by the foreknowledge and providence of God. *Fatum* is derived from *fari*; that is, to pronounce, to decree; and, in its right sense, it signifies the decree of Providence. And those who submit to it through a knowledge of the divine perfections, whereof the love of God is a consequence, have not only patience, like the heathen philosophers, but are also contented with what is ordained by God, knowing that he does every thing for the best; and not only for the greatest good in general, but also for the greatest particular good of those that love him."

LEIBNITZ, in reply to Dr. Clarke, as quoted in West's *Essay on Moral Agency*, second edition, in a note, p. 137.

under the control of the Fates." "It is urged that Fatalists refer every change to a *cause*. So do the believers in self-determination; not excepting even acts of the will.—For they hold, that the agent himself is the cause of his own volitions. They believe, also, in a *succession* of causes, dependent on God." "Many of the ancient Fatalists held that the Fates determine other things, but not the free acts of the will." "Is there no way of escaping the odium of Fatalism, but by adopting the fortuitous contingency of Epicurus? Is it Fatalism to believe, that he who formed the soul of man, can so touch the springs of its action, as to influence the will, without interfering with the freedom of its choice?" "The suggestion that a denial of contingent self-determination leads to Pantheism, is as indefinite in its application, as the charge of Fatalism. The doctrine of Pantheism, as held by Spinoza and his followers, is that the universe is God, that the material world is the only self-existent substance. What has this to do with the dependence of volition on the state of the heart, and the influence of motives? Is every action which is even remotely dependent on God, to be considered as his act?" [pp. 167, 168, 169, 170.]

The reader may by this time begin to suspect why, in the opinion of the reviewer, it was "unnecessary to dwell" upon the "brief section on Fatalism and Pantheism." Who are they, that, in opposing the old-fashioned doctrine of predestination, as held by Calvin, Owen, Edwards, &c. talk most loudly of *fate and fatal necessity*?

The last section is on "the testimony of Scripture;" and the argument is conducted with a spirit becoming one, who professes to make the Bible the supreme guide of his faith on religious subjects.

The reviewer knows not, whether it has "been the fact in New England," that "men of ardent feelings and undisciplined judgment" have used "language" which "involves the doctrine of the self-determining power." On this point, we are better informed than he professes to be; for we have heard what amounts to this doctrine, from certain preachers in New England; and we think, moreover, that some of our quotations from the publications of the New Haven theologians, imply nothing less than the very error, which it is the leading object of President Day's treatise to subvert.

The reviewer tells us, that he "cannot find a syllable in the treatise" of President Day, "which militates in the least against" the "real sentiments" of "Dr. Beecher, of Cincinnati, Prof. Stuart, of Andover, and Dr. Taylor, of New Haven." With respect to Dr. Beecher, and Dr. Taylor, our readers have the evidence before them, in the passages which we have already cited from the writings of those gentlemen. A single quotation from Prof. Stuart, may suffice, to show the extent of his agreement with President Day, on the subject of self-determination. We will let these two writers speak for themselves. We give in *italics* those words, in which the opposition between them most plainly appears.

## PRESIDENT DAY.

"But if the mind, in its volitions, is *not* self-moved, it *resembles* a *machine* in this respect, that its acts have a *dependence* upon something preceding." "From the fact that *matter* has its laws, are we justified in drawing the conclusion, that the *will* can be subject to *no laws* whatever; or if it have laws of its own, that there can be *no point of resemblance* between these and the laws of *matter*?" "Perhaps it may be thought, that the objection which we are considering, is principally directed against the law of *causation*. Because *material* phenomena have their *causes*, does it follow, that *volition* has *no cause*?"—pp. 130, 131, 132 133, 134.

## PROFESSOR STUART.

"Nor can I be persuaded, that illustrations of *free agency*, drawn from the *material* world, are in any measure apposite to our subject. Our souls are *spirit*, not *matter*. They are *like* the *God* who made them; not *like* the *dust* on which we tread. All arguments then, drawn from *cause* or *causation* and *effect* in the *material* world, and applied to the subject of *spiritual agency* and *influence*, are *wrongly* applied, and cannot serve to cast any thing but darkness on this deeply interesting subject."

Commentary on Romans, first edition, p. 565.

Whatever may be the "real sentiments" of "Professor Stuart, of Andover," his language in the foregoing passage, certainly looks like the perfect antipodes to that of President Day.



Another sentence of the reviewer, is entitled to a brief notice. "And yet we presume," he says, "the work will have the cordial approbation of Dr. Tyler, and Dr. Harvey, we should hope also of Dr. Alexander, and Dr. Miller; and we fervently wish, that it may prove a common ground, on which brethren who have differed, may meet in peace."

Is the controversy then settled? The gentlemen last named by the reviewer, will, we doubt not, approve of President Day's book, so far as it goes to subvert the peculiar speculations of the New Haven divines, and recall ministers and churches to the safe and scriptural views of past generations. Have those divines too, been led by the same book, to see, acknowledge, and lament their former errors? If so, "brethren who have differed, may" indeed, "meet in peace." The orthodox, both in New England, and in the middle and southern states, have long contemplated with deep anxiety, the strange and deceptive light issuing from the academic halls, once consecrated and endeared by the wisdom, piety, and labours of the venerable Dwight, and his faithful colleagues. Many have witnessed with amazement, the rapid degeneracy of religious principles in Yale College, the almost unrebuked perversion of sacred funds, in that cherished institution of our fathers, and of our fathers' fathers; and the apathy and cowardice in view of this apostasy, of not a few, from whom better things had been hoped and expected. They have seen with unfeigned sorrow, the blight which has come over numerous churches, by the influence of the new theology; the superficial character of revivals, where Pelagian notions of human ability, are substituted for the pure Gospel; the multiplication of divisions, where the greatest harmony was once enjoyed; the influx of perfectionism, radicalism, and infidelity, in a multitude of places, formerly blessed by the knowledge and love of genuine Christianity, and by the consequent prevalence of order, sound morals and peace; the menacing aspect of these innovations on all that is dear to the Christian's heart, as it respects this life, and the life to come; and surely they must hail with pleasure, any indications of a readiness, on the part of any influential individual, to defend the primitive doctrines of Connecticut, in the the oldest of her colleges, which was founded amidst the prayers and tears of her Puritan ancestry, and whose sons are to be found in the various departments of business, usefulness, and honor at home, and waving

the flag of commerce, and the banner of salvation, on the most distant heathen shores. They will not, we presume, follow President Day in all his opinions; they will wish that, in some instances, he had been more explicit in his statements, and in others, that he had avoided admissions, which they believe to be unnecessary, if not dangerous; but they will rejoice that he has asserted and maintained positions at variance, *toto coelo* from the shallow philosophy which affirms the independence of man's choices, under the pretence of vindicating his liberty as a moral agent, and denies the power of God to control human volitions, with the avowed design of guarding his goodness from impeachment.

The pretext of an essential agreement between the parties—a *pretext* which errorists of every description have occasionally found it convenient to assume—will impose upon none who have made themselves acquainted with the history of the controversy, and have observed the odium which the propagators of the new opinions have labored to attach to the most sacred doctrines of the reformation, and to the uncompromising advocates of the truth as it is in Jesus. When some men talk of the importance of peace, their meaning appears to be, to urge the duty of allowing them to propagate their own views, and misrepresent the views of their antagonists, without any contradiction, or attempt, by the friends of the ancient faith of Protestant Christendom, to defend themselves and their system, which is now pointed at as a crumbling fabric, destined to a speedy and irrecoverable downfall. We remember that it was formerly customary with the Unitarians in this country, to intimate, as it suited their purpose, either that the difference between them and the orthodox, related to points of but little importance, or that the scheme of their opponents was fraught with the grossest absurdity and impiety; and that wherever it should prevail, it would inevitably prove highly pernicious, if not ruinous, to the Christian cause. So, we have heard from another quarter, that the Calvinism of such men as Dr. Tyler and Dr. Harvey, is hostile to the best interests of holiness, leading, “if carried out into its legitimate consequences, to universalism, to infidelity, and to atheism.”\* Now we are gravely told by this reviewer, that the “differences” between

\* Christian Spectator, Sept. 1832.

the New Haven divines, and their opponents, "are far less than is generally supposed," and it is "fervently" wished that President Day's book "may prove a common ground, on which brethren who have differed, may meet in peace." How fortunate, sometimes, is a poor memory; and how convenient a pliable conscience, which can shape itself to the exigencies of an agitating controversy!

President Day has our sincere thanks for the volume which has now come under our review. As the questions discussed by him are vital in their relation to evangelical doctrines, we cannot but hope that he will continue to favor us with the productions of his luminous pen, on similar subjects, and that he will be sustained in his efforts, till he shall witness the complete recovery of the seminary under his care, to the pure faith of former days. Let him not be alarmed at the *possible* insinuation that he is sowing discord among brethren. "The boasted peaceableness about questions of faith, too often proceeds from a superficial temper, and not seldom from a supercilious disdain of whatever has no marketable use or value, and from indifference to religion itself. Toleration is an herb of spontaneous growth, in the soil of indifference; but the weed has none of the virtues of the medicinal plant, reared by humility in the garden of zeal. Those who regard all religions as matters of taste, may consistently include all religious differences in the old adage, "*De gustibus non est disputandum*."\*

Of the venerated author of this book, we have a far different opinion. He, we trust, loves Christian truth for *its own sake*; and should thousands around him prove treacherous to the principles they have professed, may he be prepared, like

"Abdiel, faithful found,  
Among the faithless."

to hear at last, the sentence of approbation from the mouth of his Saviour,

"Servant of God, well done; well hast thou fought  
The better fight, who single, hast maintained,  
Against revolted multitudes, the cause  
Of truth, —"

"And for the testimony of truth, hast borne  
Universal reproach, far worse to bear  
Than violence; for this was all thy care,  
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds  
Judged thee perverse."

\* *Leighton*, as quoted by Coleridge. *Aids to Reflection*, p. 65.

ART. VI.—REMARKS ON PRESIDENT DAY'S WORK  
CONTINUED.

BY THE EDITOR.

IN common with the friends of evangelical truth in most parts of our country, we have hailed with feelings of peculiar satisfaction, the appearance of correct views on the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel from New Haven, and like them, have felt disposed to make it the subject of gratitude rather than criticism. The present work is so opposite to the writings of those divines, in its spirit, is so strongly characterized by a manly ingenuous train of thought, is so free from studied ambiguity, is so accurate in its definitions, so clear in its statements, so cautious in its deductions, it is so immensely above their usual theological disquisitions, in power of thought and literary merit, that we are disposed to feel as though any thing but commendation would be misplaced; like most of those with whom we have conversed on the subject, we are strongly inclined to dismiss every fault without censure.

We rejoice in the appearance of this work; that it appears at this juncture, and that it comes from New Haven. That place seems to have been destined to furnish both the poison and the antidote. It is an able and unanswerable refutation of the errors of modern Pelagians. It was with exclusive reference to this, that we had determined to notice it; and we had fully concurred with the writer of the last article, in the propriety of passing the "dangerous admissions" of which he speaks, without particular comment. But after some consultation and mature deliberation, we have reluctantly changed our opinion. We think the book evidently destined to survive the errors which it has combated; that the character of the author, and the high literary merit of the work may give currency to positions which we think have dangerous connections; above all, that the writer has given his sanction to too much of that indeterminate phraseology, which at present is used to conceal or teach, as the case may be, errors which have an important

bearing on the Christian system ; but we extend our notice of the work, in part, for the reason, that it furnishes us with an opportunity for introducing certain detached observations on these subjects, which we could not well reduce to a distinct head.

That the treatise before us was not designed to supply the deficiencies, correct the reasonings, or overturn the principles of Edwards' great work on the Will, is evident to the most superficial reader. The writer has almost uniformly adopted the principles and reasonings of President Edwards and his son. It has not, to any great extent, a claim to originality either in its reasonings or conclusions.

It must evidently be regarded as having a direct reference to some of the popular errors of the day : there is no doubt that much of it was aimed at some of the most dangerous errors of the New Haven theology, and that it has most triumphantly overthrown them. It is to be regretted that the author has not mentioned the errors which he combats but in the most cautious way, that the persons teaching them are not named, that he states his own opinions either hypothetically or interrogatively ; the consequence will doubtless be that it will be considered as an abstract discussion by one part of the community ; that another will pass it in silence ; and that those whom it really opposes, will be the last to call public attention to subjects which they can manage best by private discussion ; above all, will they avoid a controversy which might call for a premature avowal of their sentiments. They are well aware, that, from these religious excitements which have filled our churches with the unconverted, there has issued a class of young men of their own persuasion who are on their way to the ministry, and that they have but to wait a little, and error will be triumphant without a struggle. We think, however, this book will have some influence even in New Haven and its vicinity.

We could never seriously believe with the Christian Spectator, that President Day had been guilty of forming a kind of confession of faith, couched in such ambiguous language, that persons of the most acknowledged opposition of views could unite in it ; much less could we compliment him on such a feat ; we think he could not even have persuaded himself of its feasibility, had he been capable of such a purpose.

We have long known President Day by reputation ; we

have felt a due veneration for those high intellectual and moral endowments, for which he is so deservedly distinguished—and though we have known that these high and commanding qualities have served to shield, to give countenance and support to the enemies of evangelical truth, and thus to introduce and give currency to the most dangerous error in one of our important seminaries, yet we could never suppose that President Day was fully aware of the nature and influence of those opinions which were thus springing up and spreading under the influence of his indirect patronage. But seriously, after the opinions of that school have gained the ascendancy in the Congregational Church, after they have divided the Presbyterian Communion, after their true nature and influence have been so long tested, and so fully developed, in the disorders, licentiousness, radicalism and scepticism, that they have wrought, we should have expected, bolder and more explicit avowals; we should have expected that the writer would tell us plainly, and not by hypothesis or interrogation, what is truth; more, that he himself is on the side of truth; we should have expected a more open developement of his sentiments, and to see him giving the most severe and pointed rebukes, as well as the most decided opposition to the contrary errors.

Whilst we fully concur in the opinions expressed in the preceding review, we feel it our duty to remark some things in the work of President Day, which we cannot but regard serious defects.

The fundamental propositions which this book establishes, as well as the most important of those which it opposes, are all put in an interrogative or hypothetical form.

“Executive acts MAY depend on a predominant purpose; and the purpose MAY depend on antecedent emotions. A general purpose MAY look to some distant end. But that which excites the emotion itself, MAY be an object without the mind an external motive.”

If these propositions are self-evident, or have been demonstrated, in either case, it is improper to represent them as doubtful, particularly where succeeding propositions are made to depend on them. Such cautious statements cast an air of doubt over all the conclusions, and must seriously detract from the influence and effect of a work in which they are habitually employed.

Again, we object to some points of this work, not that the



sentiments are Arminian, not that the philosophy is incorrect, but that Arminian terms and phrases are, we had almost said, studiously used, carefully explained indeed, we allow, but then frequently used in a sense different from that which they once bore, and which they still bear. It might seem to be a very harmless thing to adopt the peculiar phraseology of errorists, provided we attach a meaning to it consistent with truth; but what object can we have for adopting such language, which has already a definite signification, when we must always accompany the terms with an explanation? What useful end can be attained by the frequent use of terms which have always been employed to teach a most dangerous error, and which have already an established meaning? We refer to President Day's ascribing self-determination to the will, and that in several different senses.

"What is it," says he, "that determines, not only that there shall be volitions, but what they shall be? First, if the question be whether the man himself decides between the objects of choice presented before him, there surely can be no doubt on this point, if it be admitted that he wills at all. For to will is nothing more nor less than to decide in favor of an object of choice. It is he himself that determines. Motives may influence him to lie and steal. *But motives do not lie and steal.* Man himself chooses. He is the *author* of his own volitions. This is one signification of the term self-determination. And a power of choosing, is in *this* sense a *self-determining power*."

The amount of all this is, that every act of willing, is an act of self-determination, i. e., in every action, it is the agent himself, and not another person who acts; and therefore it must be proper to regard every act of voluntary determination, as an act of *self-determination*. Every action may be presumed to be performed by some agent, and so we may, with much propriety, say that it is *self-performed*. We would barely observe, that this is changing the established meaning of words, and that to a very poor purpose. The term *self*, when compounded with a word which signifies action, is the object, and not the agent of that action. It would hardly be proper to say of the act of him who sacrifices a goat, that it is an act of self-sacrifice, because the man himself performs the act; or that an act of love to God, is an act of self-love, merely because there is an agent in the case. But this would be no

more than carrying out President Day's principle. By a similar violence to language, we may say, with perfect truth, of an honest man that he is a great rogue, or by giving our own meaning to terms, may say, even of the will, that it is round, square, swift or slow, black or white, or any thing we please. It is hardly worth the while to do violence to language, for the purpose of being able to bring into use terms which have invariably been used to teach the most pernicious error. We trust that President Day, has no intention of establishing a language which the adherents of opposite opinions may adopt to express their peculiar sentiments. We can assure him that such a language is unnecessary. The advocates of heresy find no difficulty now, in making use of the language of the most solemn instruments, to teach the very errors which they were framed expressly to condemn.

But further, President Day teaches, very literally, that one act of the will actually determines the existence of another, and that this is very commonly the case. He does not, however, introduce contingent volitions; he teaches after all, that the act which determines the rest, the deciding act, is always produced by an influence from without. "We are not inquiring whether a man has any thing to do in determining the nature of his own acts of will, but whether they are *wholly independent of every thing else*." He denies that he has the whole agency in determining these acts, but asserts, most explicitly, that he has some agency in the affair. "What determines a man to will thus? Is it a *preceding* act of the will? *This is undoubtedly the case in many instances*. Taking the will in its most enlarged acceptation, as including, not only executive acts, but purposes and emotions, acts of one class may be determined by those of another. A man purposes to go to the post office. Every step he takes on his way, is determined by this purpose. And the purpose may have been determined by some strong emotion; an eager desire to receive intelligence of the recovery of a friend from sickness, or the safe arrival of a richly freighted ship. Farther, the emotions themselves are commonly excited either by perceptions of external realities, or by the internal imaginings of our own minds. Imperative acts of the will, then, may be preceded by purposes, the purposes by emotions, the emotions by perceptions, or the workings of imagination. But all these belong to the

mind. They do not reach beyond ourselves. *So that thus far, our emotions and volitions may be truly said to be self-determined.*"

Here, while President Day acknowledges that the determining, decisive act in this train, is neither contingent nor self-determined; he nevertheless allows that some of these volitions "may be said to be self-determined." The expression "that our *emotions* and *volitions* may be said to be self-determined, by itself, is manifestly absurd; he means, not that the acts determine themselves, but as he explains himself previously, in the commencement of our quotation, that preceding acts determine the existence of succeeding ones, that "acts of one class, may be determined by those of another." But even here, he does not teach expressly, that the will, by a separate act of volition, chooses which of a number of possible acts, shall succeed that act; he does not say, in the face of his own definitions, that one act of the will is the object of another. It must, however, be confessed, that while he overthrows the philosophy of the Arminians with a mighty hand, he is not sufficiently guarded about adopting the language in which their errors were taught. Like some ancient warrior, he is too fond of arraying himself in the dress of the enemies which he has just slain. He does not ascribe to the will, what has always been understood by a self-determining power. President Edwards says, "if the will determines all its free acts, it determines them in the exercise of a power of willing and choosing, or which is the same thing, it determines them of choice, it determines its own acts by choosing its own acts." Now what is it that he says the soul chooses—what is the object of the acts of this self-determining power, as opposed by President Edwards? Why its next acts? "*It determines its own acts, by choosing its own acts.*"

But though President Day makes use of the phraseology of this Arminian Philosophy, he does not adopt its dogmas. He does not say that one act of the will is really and literally, the object of a preceding one. The fundamental definitions of his treatise forbid him to adopt such a proposition. He commences his work by determining what are the objects of the several acts of volition. An emotion, he informs us, fixes on an object—a purpose on an end—and an imperative volition, on an external action. He nowhere tells us that one act of volition fixes on another. He says, in-

deed, that there is often a connection between these several acts of volition, but he does not attempt to prove that there is such a connection, as that one, in any sense, becomes the cause upon which alone, its successor depends. Emotions, evidently have no necessary connection with purposes, or imperative volitions. They are called forth in innumerable instances, without giving birth to actions, or even purposes. A man may have an ardent desire for some particular object, yet may forbear to form a purpose for its gratification, from the persuasion that such a purpose is not feasible, or that it would interfere with his obtaining of an object still more dear. In every case a judgment of the mind intervenes between a purpose and an emotion; in other words, the purpose always follows the last dictate of the understanding, and the same is true of imperative volition.

We feel constrained to say that we regard it as a useless and dangerous innovation in the use of language, to say for instance of acts of memory, of love, of hatred or revenge, of volition in general, that they are acts of self-recollection, of self-love, of self-hatred, of self-revenge, of self-volition; it is changing the meaning of established forms of expression, and for what purpose? Why, to express the rare truth, that in every action there must be an agent, and that every action is actually performed by the agent himself.

We regret, also, to hear President Day use language that seems to imply, that the agent, by preceding acts of choice, often determines what particular acts of volition shall succeed; he means only, that there is often a connection between the three different kinds of volition, and in reality wholly denies the doctrine which Edwards has exploded. We design, presently, to speak further of the three kinds of volition, their connection, nature, and moral character.

We cannot skip over the section on the influence of motives, which we regard as the most exceptionable in the book, without bestowing on it a passing notice. We think that we here see, not only the adoption of very objectionable phraseology, but also, some slight departure from fundamental principles which have been considered as long settled. We will first give President Edwards' view of the influence of motives, and follow it by that of President Day.

"By determining the will, if the phrase be used with any meaning, must be intended, causing that the act of the will or choice should be thus and not otherwise; and the will

is said to be determined, when, in consequence of some action or influence, its choice is directed to, and fixed upon a particular object."

"A determination of the will, *supposes an effect* which must have a cause. If the will *be determined*, there must be a *determiner*. With respect to that grand inquiry "what determines the will," it is sufficient to my present purpose to say, *It is that motive, which as it stands in view of the mind, is the strongest, that determines the will.*" Here President Edwards attributes volition to the influence of a cause, a simple cause, which he calls the strongest motive. President Day, as we shall presently see, while he considers volition not as contingent, as *having no cause*, but as an effect, still regards it as an effect which owes its existence not to a single cause, but to the combined influence of several antecedents, which have each an influence in its production; he ascribes it to the influence of "motives, occasions, conditions of the mind itself, &c."

President Edwards proves that motives, are the proper efficient causes of volition, that volition is actually excited by motives. We give his reasoning. "That every act of the will has some cause, and so has a necessary connection with its cause, is evident by this, *that every act of the will whatsoever, is excited by some motive: WHICH IS MANIFEST, BECAUSE*, if the mind, in willing after the manner it does, is excited by no motive or inducement, then it has no end which it proposes to itself, or pursues in so doing; it aims at nothing, and seeks nothing. And if it seeks nothing, then it does not go after any thing, or exert any inclination or preference towards any thing, which brings the matter to a contradiction; because, for the mind to will something, and for it to go after something by an act of preference and inclination, are the same thing."

We think this a conclusive proof, that every act of the will is really excited by some motive. The philosopher proceeds, "but if every act of the will is excited by a motive, *then that motive is the CAUSE of the act.* If the acts of the will are excited by motives, then motives are *the causes of their being excited*; or which is the same thing, of their existence. And if so, the existence of the acts of the will, *is properly the effect of their motives.* Motives do nothing as motives or inducements, but *by their influence*, and so much as is done by their influence, is the effect of them. For that is

the notion of an effect, something that is brought to pass by the influence of something else." "Thus it is manifest, that volition is necessary, and is not from any self-determining power in the will; the volition which is caused by previous motive and inducement, is not caused by the will exercising a sovereign power over itself, to determine, cause, and excite volitions in itself."

All are ready to allow, that the agent is active in the act of volition. This is all the activity, voluntariness, freedom and accountability of which he is capable, or which is conceivable. But still it remains true, that volition is an effect, and when we take from Arminians and Pelagians, their absurd notion of self-determination, it matters little to them, which is made the cause of volition, what brings it into existence, if so be, it be not the agent himself. He has no agency except in the act, no accountability but for the act. And provided this be the fact, it matters little to those objectors, what it is which excites volition, provided it be not the man himself. It is evidently something as remote from his agency, as the state of the weather, the influence of the moon, the winds, the attraction of gravitation, electricity or magnetism. We think that the reasoning of President Edwards, which ascribes the existence of volition to the influence of motives, is conclusive, and we have no doubt that this opinion is altogether agreeable to the common sense of mankind.

We will now listen to President Day. "But are motives the *causes* of volition? According to Dr. Reid, motives *influence*, but do not *cause* acts of the will. The meanings of the term cause, are so various, some of them limited, and others more extended, that the assertion, that motives are the cause of volition, ought not to be made without many qualifications. That they are the *sole* cause is certainly not true, if the word cause be used to signify every antecedent upon which an effect depends. *Motives do not produce volitions without a mind. They are not the agent. They do not love and hate, resolve and choose.*" We think the three last sentences a serious blemish on this book; they are altogether unworthy of President Day. The inquiry was, what are the causes of the volitions of the human mind? and he tells us that it cannot be, that motives are the sole cause, because there could be no volitions unless there were a mind to will; that the mind itself must be one of the

causes. With the same propriety might an enquirer into the causes of earthquakes put down the earth itself as one of these causes, because forsooth were there no earth to quake, the quaking of the earth would be quite out of the question. We freely grant that if there be volitions of the mind, that there must also be a mind that wills; but still we think it is using the word cause with an unwarrantable latitude to employ it as President Day has, in the above quotation. Further, when the inquiry was whether motives excite the acts of an agent, we think that it was unnecessary for the writer to remind us that it is the agent and not motives that act. The inquiry respected his acts, it related to their cause, the agency of the person acting was assumed by the very question, and the inquiry related to the cause of it. President Day resorts to this process of reasoning in several instances, to prove that motives are not the sole cause of volition. Page 60, he adds further, "The object, then, can have no influence on the volition, except by influencing the mind, in other words, there must be not only a motive, but an agent." This, we think, looks too much like trifling with language. But it is granting all that is required; provided it be first admitted that there is an agent, it would seem that he is willing to allow that motives alone, influence him, but the existence of an agent must be first allowed. He concludes the paragraph thus: "The agent does not will without motives; *nor do motives will without an agent.*"

President Day, in the quotations we shall next present, seems too remiss in contending for the only proper term which expresses the relation between motives and volitions. He would seem to concede not only that they are not the sole cause of choice, but to be willing to give up the term cause altogether, and substitute in place of it, the occasion or condition of volition.

"It is frequently said that motives are not the cause, but the condition or occasion of volition. This *phrasology* may be very proper, provided it be granted that volition is, in any degree, *dependent* on motives. It is immaterial for the purpose of our present inquiry, whether volitions are determined, by causes, or occasions, or conditions or inducements, or all these together; if it be admitted that they have any influence in the determination." "Calling motives conditions or occasions, rather than causes, does not prove that they are void of all influence." True, but if motives con-



stitute a part of that compound cause which produces the effect, it is proper to apply to them the only term which expresses this relation, and improper to apply to them a term which is habitually used to express an entirely different, and more distant relation. The one is a relation of dependence, the other only of antecedence.

"But" continues the writer, "are motives the efficient cause of volition? If by efficient cause, be meant the agent, the being who wills, no one supposes that, in this sense, motives are efficient. They do not purpose and resolve and choose. Or if by efficient cause, be meant the immediate antecedent of volition, this cannot be an external motive. Between that and the volition, there must intervene, an apprehension of the object, and consequent feeling excited in the mind." In this passage, as in several others, President Day does not treat the feelings or emotions as acts of volition, he makes a distinction between those mental operations, though he, at setting out, had formally defined the emotions to be acts of the will, and almost uniformly treats them as such. Here we will observe, that the only foundation for the assertion that the motive is not the immediate antecedent of volition, is that the term motive is too generally used in a very restricted sense in this treatise; here it is distinguished from an apprehension of the object which is made the immediate antecedent of volition.—This gives rise to most of the peculiarity of language in this and other sections. President Edwards does not make this distinction between motive and apprehension, but comprehends both under one term. "By motive," says he, "I mean the whole of that which moves, excites, or invites the mind to volition, whether that be one thing simply, or many things conjunctly." "Whatever is objectively a motive, in this sense, must be something *that is extant in the view or apprehension of the understanding*, or perceiving faculty." The restricted meaning, often given to the term motive, in this work, the separation of the external motive from the manner and circumstances of the mind's apprehension of it, is the foundation for the frequent assertion, that the mind, and the perception of the object have the same claim to be considered causes of volition as motives themselves. This, also, is the reason for his assertion, that the state of the mind has a share with motives in determining the existence of particular volitions. Whereas, President

Edwards considers the state of the mind as a constituent of motive itself, as that which determines the strength of the motive by determining the limit of the mind's view of the object, both as to vividness and extent. President Day says, "the diversity of effects produced upon different minds by the same external object, is probably the reason why some writers ascribe the efficacy of motives to the mind itself. The true state of the case is, that the efficacy belongs to both ; or to the relation between one and the other." Thus Pres. Day makes a distinction between motive and state of the mind, and supposes that volition is owing to the combined influence of both. He agrees, however, with President Edwards in sentiment, though not in terms. President Edwards comprehends the state of the mind, in his definition of motives, which he thus describes. "And I think it must also be allowed by all, that every thing that is properly called a motive, has some sort and degree of tendency or advantage to move or excite the will, previous to the act of the will excited. This previous tendency of the motive, is what I call the strength of the motive." "*Things that exist in view of the mind*, have their strength, tendency, or advantage to move, or excite its will from many things appertaining to the nature and circumstances of the *thing viewed*, the *nature* and circumstances of the mind that views and the degree and manner of its views." After premising that "an appearing most agreeable to the mind and the mind's preferring, seem scarcely distinct," he continues, "volition is always determined," not by the object, but "by that in and about the mind's view of the object *which causes it to appear* most agreeable. I say in or about the mind's view of the object, because what has influence to render an object in view agreeable, is not only what appears in the object viewed, but also the manner of the view, and the *state and the circumstances of the mind that views*."

"But, possibly," he adds, "it is needless to mention the state of the mind, in addition to the apparent nature and circumstances of the object viewed, and the manner of the view ; perhaps, if we strictly consider the matter, the different temper and state of the mind causes the idea of beauty or deformity, pleasure or uneasiness to be more or less lively, as it occasions the manner of the view to be different."

We think almost the whole difference in the language of President Day and President Edwards, on the subject of

the influence of motives, arises from the different meanings they attach to the terms motive and volition. President Day enters into an unnecessary analysis of mental acts, and makes volitions to be emotions, purposes and imperative volitions, making the first of these always the motive of the two last, and of course, not making choice, the distinguishing quality of each. President Edwards embraces under the term volition, all that can be called choice, and consequently comprehends under one term, actions, ends, and external objects which President Day makes the object of emotions, purposes and volitions. President Day uses the term motive to denote an object, as it exists externally.—President Edwards, to denote it as it exists in the mind's view. The object evidently can move the mind only *as it is seen*, and *so far* as it is seen; and its strength depends upon the vividness and manner of the view. The object and its circumstances and appendages, its distance as to time, the difficulty of attainment, things which exist separately without, may, however, have a unity as they are beheld by the mind, may constitute one object of mental vision, and be the cause of volition. President Day, by using motive as he has done, has felt obliged to premise that there must be a mind that views, and an apprehension of the object, and that these, together with the state of the mind of the beholder, gave influence to motives. Both these writers make volition an effect, and the effect of the same cause, the motive and the state of the mind. But President Edwards teaches that the state of the mind has no influence except to change the manner of the mind's view, he represents it only as limiting the motive, i. e. the mind's view of the object, either as to its vividness or its extent.

By the state of the mind, both these writers intend the particular frame of mind a person may be in at the time, or that particular disposition or temper which a person inherits from nature, or has acquired by education or habit. Now it is most evident, that either of these will lead persons to take very different views of the objects which come before them. President Day says, "the entrance of an individual into a social circle, may draw admiration from some of the company, and envy from others." A wag might be disposed to scrutinize any peculiarities in his manners and be amused, a person who had received a recent kindness might be most disposed to contemplate his virtues, and be filled

with respect, one who had received a recent slight or affront would be more likely to contemplate the faulty parts of his character ; perhaps that from which he himself had recently suffered would be uppermost, and it would excite dislike, and perhaps resentment ; a person of fine taste might be most disposed to contemplate his graceful manners or fine genius, and be filled with admiration. A person who might on ordinary occasions, have been impressed with respect for his talents, may, by the influence of a tender passion, be induced to enlarge his view of the object, take some further circumstances into his vision, he may, perhaps, consider what impression these qualities may make on another person present, and may be filled, possibly, with envy, at least with apprehension. Admiration at all events, will not be the principal effect produced on his mind in this case. A person in a very merry mood, will not instantly be prepared to fix his mind on the sad points of a tragic narrative, and on the other hand, a person under the influence of feelings of sadness, will not be disposed to fix his mind intensely on the ridiculous points of an amusing anecdote ; yet, in both cases, provided that either of these should take full possession of the mind, so as to produce a vivid conception, the effect would be inevitable ; they would excite the appropriate emotion ; the person would for a moment forget his joy or sadness. The state of the mind then, really alters the object as it stands to the view ; it gives the limit to the extent and vividness of the view.

We think that President Day has been inaccurate in the two leading and decisive terms, on the subject of the will, motive, and volition, the cause and effect, and this circumstance has had its natural influence in shedding a degree of confusion and obscurity over several parts of his work.

President Edwards defines motive, to be that which actually moves ; he makes it to be the object, not as it exists, but as it is seen. Its strength to move, varies as it is fully or but partially seen, as the view is vivid or otherwise, as it is surveyed by itself or with its concomitants, as it is considered of easy or difficult attainment. This, perhaps, may be considered as the *amount* or *measure of the* motive rather than its *strength*, but it is that which gives the limit to its influence. This definition assigns to this most interesting of all effects, a single cause ; a cause upon whose influence alone the effect is really dependent.

President Edwards all along, proceeds upon the principle that the motive, as its very name indicates, is the only thing which causes or moves volition. This is one of the fundamental positions in his philosophy. Motives are the only objects of volition, they are things chosen, they excite preference, for they are what is preferred. It is implied in the proposition, that any thing is the object of love, that the object, and that alone, excites or calls forth this love.

It has always been the favorite position of Arminians and Pelagians, that motives, of themselves, do not produce volition, that they owe their influence to a previous volition.—The sufficiency of motives to produce this effect, they are aware, makes their self-determining power of the will unnecessary, and for this reason they assert, that motives owe a part of their influence to a voluntary concurrence of the mind, which determines to fall under their influence, and give its consent that they should be the ground of its volitions. From unwillingness to allow that the thing which we prefer alone excites our preference, they run into the absurdity, either of a previous preference in which nothing is chosen, or “making the prevailing of the motive, the consequence of that of which it is yet the ground.” If the mind does not give influence to motives, by a voluntary concurrence, any other influence which it may exert, to produce this effect, is absolutely useless to the purposes for which it is supposed; any other influence, we may add, is quite inconceivable. We think that President Day has used language on this subject, which is not sufficiently explicit, and which is liable to misconstruction. “The concurrence of the mind in *giving efficacy to motives*,” he observes, “is evident from the fact that the same external object will excite in different minds very different feelings, and lead to very different choices. The diversity of effects produced upon different minds, by the same external object, is probably the reason why some writers ascribe the efficacy of motives to the mind itself. The true state of the case is, that the *efficacy* belongs to *both*, or to the relation between one and the other.” We confess that in this passage, there seems to be something beyond the proposition, that the strength of motives depends upon the state of the mind, particularly when we take it in connection with what soon follows. “The power of the mind over the objects which it contemplates, is not such that it can make them *all* agreeable and *in any*

*degree* at its *bidding*. If this were the case, happiness would be of easy attainment. We should merely have to *will* that every thing which we hear and see and feel, should be to us, sources of enjoyment only. We could be unhappy in no other way than by choosing to be so." Here it would appear, from the connection, that the author was giving limits to the proposition immediately preceding, that this power of the mind to make objects agreeable, has its bounds; that is, that the concurrence of the mind, to give influence to motives, is not unlimited in its extent. If this be so, it must be evident, from the latter part of the quotation, that he had reference to a voluntary concurrence.

We say that the connection would seem to authorize such an interpretation; we think the language not sufficiently guarded, but would be far from imputing such an opinion to President Day, especially as in other parts of his work, he most evidently seems to have expressed a different opinion.

If by concurrence of the mind, is meant no active concurrence, but barely that the existence of mind is necessary to give influence to motives, it may be said that the existence of the mind is of course presupposed, when we are attempting to account for the existence of its acts. We have no scruple in asserting, that any other active concurrence of the mind, than that which is voluntary, is inconceivable and not at all to the purpose of those who are unwilling to attribute volition solely to the influence of motives.

But from the expression that President Day uses in reference to this subject, it is probable that by the term concurrence of the mind, he refers to the will itself. He says that volition is owing both to the mind and motive, "or to the relation between the one and the other." If this be his meaning, we regard the language as both improper and superfluous; when we are inquiring for the cause of the will's being excited, it is of course presupposed that the will that is thus excited has an existence, otherwise the inquiry would be quite unnecessary.

President Edwards taught, (and till lately it was never disputed,) that we possess by nature, the faculty of the will; that volition is only an act of this faculty; that motives alone produce volitions in the mind, without its previous voluntary concurrence; that to suppose that the will must always choose, previous to the influence of any motive, is

to suppose it to choose without a motive or object of choice, to choose where nothing is chosen.

There is now a prevailing disposition to represent the will not as a power or faculty existing in the mind, and belonging to the mind, but as an abstract power or ability of willing, a power that we may exert or not as we please, and how we please, and as much as we please. For this bare ability of will is of no use unless we please to exert it; the mind must choose when to use it, how far to use it, and how to use it; that is, another will is necessary to set the first in motion and direct its operations, so that Dr. Beecher's phrase, "*voluntary use of the will*" becomes strictly philosophical. The destructive errors which have recently been introduced to our churches, owe their plausibility almost altogether to a settled attempt to modify and change the established language which has heretofore obtained on moral subjects. Perhaps no phrase has had more influence than the new term power of willing, instead of the will. Those who use this phraseology, employ it not to mean the faculty of the will, but a power to direct and control volitions. They speak of it just as we do of our power over our limbs, which always presupposes a previous act of volition to bring it into exercise. Another will becomes necessary to the exercise of this power.

President Edwards had no controversy with the Arminians and Pelagians of his time, on the existence of the will as a faculty. He contended with them only on the subject of its laws. He defines the will to be "*THAT by which the mind chooses any thing.*" The faculty of the will is that POWER or PRINCIPLE of mind by which we are CAPABLE of choosing. An act of the will, is the same as an act of choosing." Though President Day expressly calls the will a faculty, yet he has not been so particular as to the definition of it. President Edwards defines the will precisely as we do the understanding, by describing its acts, and he makes the "power of willing" about which we now hear so much in certain quarters, to be consequence of the possession of the will, and not the will itself. He says expressly, that the will "is that power or principle of mind by which we are CAPABLE of *choosing*." The Arminians or Pelagians of the present time, carry their scepticism vastly farther than those of Edwards' days. These men would have insuperable objections to considering the will, something



which is a part of the mind, in the same sense as memory, judgment, or imagination, which belongs to it by nature, and would not scruple to call the acts of such a will, physical sin or physical holiness, and to every change in it, would not hesitate to employ the terms physical depravity or physical regeneration. Though these divines often make the heart an act of the mind, yet they generally scruple not, to speak of the will as something distinct from its acts. Now if the will be not a faculty, something which exists in the mind, which belongs to the mind, if it be a bare abstract ability, then its acts are the acts of that abstract power, but its acts are also acts of the mind, and it can hardly be proper to say of them, that they are at the same time the acts of the mind, and also of something which does not form a part of the mind. If we concede that they are the acts of this mysterious ability, still they are the acts of a power which has been conferred, and as it is absurd to suppose the existence of another will, to give activity to this power, they are acts which will take place, and be what they are, without any choice of ours to that effect, and are still of a voluntary accountable nature. But it is most evident, from the very construction of language, and the unguarded expressions of those who hold to the contrary, that the acts of the will are not exceptions to other mental operations; that they are capable of being classed and referred to some faculty. It is most evident, that the human mind does not put forth a certain class of acts, without some original endowment or constitution which fits it for this purpose.

We are well aware of the objections that are made to the proposition, that the acts of a faculty of the mind, possess a moral character. President Edwards, by writing on the will, and considering it as one of the mental faculties, may very justly be called by these new divines, the great teacher of physical depravity. He has elsewhere explained what he means by calling the will a principle, or faculty, which enables us to choose. "Human nature, he says, *must* be created with some dispositions; a disposition to relish some things as good and amiable, and to be averse to other things as odious and disagreeable; otherwise it must be without any such thing as inclination or will; perfectly indifferent, without preference, without choice or aversion, towards any thing as agreeable or disagreeable. But if it had any *con-created dispositions* at all, they must be either *right* or *wrong*, either agreeable or disagreeable to the nature of

things." It is altogether owing then, to concreated or inherited dispositions, that we have any inclination towards any moral object, that we are able to choose any thing.—These inherent dispositions or affections are the will. "I humbly conceive, says President Edwards, that the affections of the soul are not properly distinguished from the will, as though they were two faculties of the soul. The affections are no other than the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul." He elsewhere says that the "acts of the affections are only certain modes of the exercise of the will."

If there be any action of the mind, towards either an end or an action, which does not involve choice, we can have no concern with it in an inquiry which respects only those voluntary acts, which we define by calling them preference. Now when we have once determined that there is such a faculty as the will, that it is only by the action of the innate affections, that any object can become agreeable or otherwise, or, in other words, be chosen, when we have decided that choice does not involve any operation of the mind, distinct from the act of these affections, it is evidently improper to call these things which are the only acts of the will, the motives to such acts; custom may have sanctioned such use; but it involves an absurdity, makes one choice the motive to another; its only tendency will be to shed absurdity through all our reasonings on these subjects.

We think that President Edwards has established his great principle, that motives alone determine the will, by reasoning that is unanswerable; and we regret to see, that President Day has used so much language that seems to militate against it. But we are of opinion that the discrepancy between them is rather apparent than real. President Day has carried his analysis of the mental powers to a needless extent, and has been far from using language with sufficient precision.

On the subject of the affections, or the emotions, as it is now the custom to call them, we cannot forbear to express our wish, that President Day had been more explicit. He has defined them to be acts of the will—but we could have wished that he had said more as to the fact of their being, in themselves, of a moral nature, and also innate. This would have been entirely coincident with his object, in combatting the errors of New Haven. It is the fundamental

proposition of those divines, that there is no such thing as original sin, that we have no innate sinful affections. We intend to offer some further observations on that subject—but without being aware of the fact, we have already protracted our remarks, to an extent, much beyond what we had originally intended. We are aware that our readers in general, have an aversion for long articles, especially when they relate to abstract subjects. Our excuse for frequently engaging in such discussions is, that the principles involved in them, are really at the foundation of the disorders and errors which are distracting the Church. We will say so much in excuse, that we would not carry our readers through long and rough routes, if we knew any smoother and more direct, and this, perhaps, as much on our own account as theirs. We feel it our duty, however, after the fatigue of following us so far, to look out a resting place for them.—We shall, therefore, make what we have to say further on the subject of the innate voluntary affections, the subject of the next article, and shall be happy to meet our readers, after they have sufficiently recruited themselves, at the beginning of the next chapter.

---

ART. VII.—SINFUL VOLITIONS FROM SINFUL INNATE AFFECTIONS OR DISPOSITIONS.

By the Editor.

Ever since the New Haven divines have attacked the doctrine of native depravity, there has been a systematic attempt to prove that there is no such thing in man as innate affections that are of a moral nature; that the passions, affections and propensities of human nature are all innocent; and that only certain mental acts which are called volitions are of an accountable nature. The affections have been most carefully distinguished from the will. The nature of some of these which are confessedly bad, has been gradually changed and refined away by artful definitions; others more obstinate, have been acknowledged to be sinful, but their

sinfulness is attributed to some preceding act of sin, which gave them their malignity, and which has always continued to appear with them to perpetuate it. But nevertheless, the native affections and passions of human nature, all that can be said to belong to nature, is called constitutional, and the exercises of these are carefully distinguished from what they call volition.

Of those who deny that the acts of any innate affections are of a moral nature, one party believe "that the will does in every instance yield to these," but yet whenever it thus yielded, there was power to the contrary; others assert the existence in the will, of an actual power to rise above the demands of appetite and self-love; that the will is not determined absolutely by the extraneous cause, but is in fact self-determined. In opposition to both these, we intend to establish the great evangelical truth, that the acts of certain innate affections are of a moral nature, not that they cause volition, but that they constitute it; that they are, in their own nature, voluntary; that volition is of a moral nature, no farther than it consists in these; that volition is something more than a decision of the understanding between the desirableness of objects, towards all of which the mind, without these moral feelings, would be indifferent; that volition, properly so called, is nothing more than an inward affection of the soul towards those moral objects which the law of God requires us to regard with love or aversion.

The followers of Dr. Taylor, while they profess to believe that all human volitions, previous to regeneration, are sinful, yet deny the existence of a sinful heart, from whence these sinful volitions proceed; they believe that to regard the actions of any innate affections as sinful, is to make depravity physical. Dr. Emmons and his followers had furnished them with this fundamental principle, but they are justly startled at the conclusions which these bold men have ventured to deduce from it. The last mentioned divine, who denied innate depravity, was compelled by his principles to resolve all moral action, both holy and sinful into immediate divine efficiency, for without this, he could not account for the existence of any accountable agency whatever. The followers of Dr. Taylor, while they deny that human depravity is innate, dare not venture to advance in plain terms, the doctrine of the self-determining power of the will. They can attribute the existence of sinful voli-

tions neither to a sinful heart or nature, nor to previous volition, and they have embraced the only theory that was left to them. We think that Dr. Taylor, in tracing the source of human depravity, has shown his ingenuity, by pitching upon the only scheme which is conceivable by one who has abandoned the received doctrine of original sin, and cannot replace it by the doctrine of the self-determining power of the will. We will give his scheme in his own words.

"This self-love, or desire of happiness, is the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference or choice, which supremely fix on any object. In every moral being who forms a moral character, there must be a first moral act of preference or choice. This must respect some one object, God or mammon as the chief good, or as an object of supreme affection. Now whence comes such choice or preference? The answer which human consciousness gives, is, that the being constituted with the desire of happiness, desires to be happy, and knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects, considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived; and as in this respect he judges or estimates their relative value, so he chooses the one or the other as his chief good."

This is the system which is substituted in place of the received doctrine of native depravity. These few words contain the whole system as it is found scattered through volumes. Here we come to the true pineal gland where the whole soul of New Haven theology centres, and we shall improve the opportunity which it affords of giving our readers a birdseye view of these new philosophical propositions which have so happily relieved dogmatic theology of its difficulties. Here is the Pisgah from whence he may survey at a glance the whole land of promise, into which so many are urging him to enter. We will just request the reader to refer to the above passage, to see that our interpretation does it no violence.

First, what is the primary cause or reason of all acts of choice or preference which fix supremely on any object, that is of volitions, holy or sinful, is it a holy or sinful heart or moral nature? No. But still it is an innate affection, mere self-love, or the desire of happiness; and one and the same cause is assigned for the existence of volitions differing infinitely in their nature and deserts. But "whence comes such

choice or preference?" What does the New School moral agent take into view, in making his choice? Does he take into view simply what is right, what is worthy of choice, what conscience approves; has he any respect to the authority of God; does he even stop to enquire what is his will? No. No such thing; "knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects, he simply considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived." Has he any use for a conscience; has he any concern with what is right? None whatever. The new school conscience inquires only from which object "the greatest happiness may be derived." But is this moral agent always invariably governed in his choice by this innate affection? It is true, he always inquires from which object the most happiness is to be derived, but will he always choose according to this estimate? Invariably. "And as in this respect he judges or estimates their relative value, so he chooses the one or the other as his chief good." The man always acts up to the light that he has even in his impenitence.—He follows his conscience, he will always choose the object from whence he expects the most happiness. He would always then choose the object from which most happiness actually is to be obtained, provided he knew it. How then does the man become a sinner? By mistake. What makes the new kind of saint? Sagacity to discover from which object he can derive most happiness. We see how radical is the change of heart which these men inculcate. We can no longer wonder at the great success about which they are constantly boasting, that the system makes converts so easily and speedily, promotes piety so powerfully, and so frequently leads to perfection. We know too, from this passage, how much they mean by total depravity, regeneration and the special influence of the Holy Spirit, and how firmly they adhere to the standards of the Church. According to this system, christians choose God as their portion, not from any sense of duty, not because they feel he has any right to claim their affections; not because they see any intrinsic excellence in his character, but simply because they expect more happiness from him than from mammon. Christians love God with the same inward affection that they love the world; this self-love they tell us, is that constitutional heart to which they say Jehovah has reference, when he commands men to love him with all the heart. The only dif-

ference between saints and sinners on this system, is that which respects their judgments. Self-love, the innate affection which alone attaches them to objects, is the same in all. "Self-love" they say, "is the primary cause of all moral action." "The happiness of the agent in some form, is the ultimate end of all specific voluntary action." Self-love then is the primary cause, and the happiness of the agent the ultimate end of all moral action in God, in holy angels, in devils, in saints, and in sinners. These unwearied opponents of physical depravity then teach that the innate affection of self-love is the primary cause of all preference, the reason that any object is agreeable or otherwise, and that choice is only the judgment the mind forms as to the relative power of objects to gratify this innate affection. Thus after all the invectives against what they are pleased to call physical depravity and physical holiness, after denying regeneration and the special influences of the Spirit, after confounding the distinctions of right and wrong, they are at last obliged to make innate affections the primary cause of all holiness and all sin. And even these do not account for the facts which they were meant to explain. The philosopher was to account for the reason why a moral agent chooses God or mammon as the object of supreme affection. How is he to determine from which object the greatest happiness is to be derived? How is he to know which object is most agreeable, God or mammon, if he have always heretofore surveyed both with indifference, if he have never exercised any inward affection to either, as is the case by supposition. It is as if a man were to decide which he liked best, an apple or an orange, before tasting of either.

The New Philosophy then, in opposing physical holiness and physical sin, traces all holiness and sin to the same innate affection; makes God and mammon the object of the same innate desires: makes all volitions the operation of an innate affection, and entirely confounds the distinctions between right and wrong.

The authors of this system had denied the existence of any disposition separate from volitions, by which moral objects are agreeable or otherwise—they knew the absurdity of self-determination, that it would be too bold to assert that the mind has power, by a simple act of volition, to make any moral object agreeable or otherwise, according to its pleasure, when all moral objects are indifferent to it; and



there remained to them no other theory imaginable, by which they could account for the existence of sin or reason at all on moral objects. We regard the theory which we have noticed above, as the only one that remains to those who retain the exercise scheme as it is called, and cannot receive the whole doctrine of Emmons, or the system of self-determination.

We regard this as their only refuge : it is a system of Epicurean philosophy, a systematic denial of moral distinctions. These shocking positions lie at the foundation of their system, and the peculiar sentiments on this subject are found to have a prominent place in the theology of all who embrace it.

Respecting the source of human volitions, we believe that very few who are acquainted with the writings of Pres. Edwards and his son, will be disposed to attribute their existence and character to a self-determining power in the will, that is, to previous volitions which determine their existence and nature. It is notorious that the absurdity of this scheme has been so fully demonstrated, that for a long period, none have ventured to defend it.

We believe that in denying the existence of innate depravity, that sinful volitions proceed from a sinful disposition, the new divines have denied a first principle, the universal dictate of the common sense of mankind ; something which till of late was never questioned. Mankind have always believed that pride, envy, ambition, hatred, malice, and revenge are something more than resolutions formed in youth : they know that they are passions which belong to our nature, and they instinctively pronounce sentence against every violent outbreking of these feelings, and the bold assertions that are now so constantly made, that all the affections, passions and immanent dispositions of human nature are innocent, can advance the cause of new divinity only as they produce infidelity, deny moral distinctions and sap the foundation of morals.

But, if such assertions have this tendency, we regard the scheme which the New Haven school advance as to the source of volitions, as a plain unequivocal denial of the distinction between virtue and vice, holiness and sin. Unable to trace all sinful volitions to previous choice, and unwilling to trace them to immanent sinful disposition, in order to find a source of volition, they trace all holy and sinful volitions

to an innate affection, which in their view, has no moral character. Happiness is made the ultimate end of all voluntary action, the object of all holy and sinful volition. This is not the happiness which results from virtuous affections, for besides that it is assigned as the object, instead of the effect, of these volitions—it is also equally the object of sinful ones. It is a mere sensual Epicurean happiness, and the difficulties about moral agency are solved by denying the distinction between right and wrong.

Such are, as we believe, the necessary consequences of denying the doctrine of original sin, that the acts of certain innate affections are of a moral nature.

Respecting the influence of motives in exciting the native disposition of the heart, they either do it alone or they owe their influence to some act of the will giving them this power. One thing is granted, that a motive is always necessary in volition, is implied in it; there must always be something which is willed, some object of volition. Now if the motive has influence to call forth volition only by a preceding choice of ours to fall under its influence, then we must enquire what is the object or motive that has influence in that previous or determining volition as much as in the one determined. Besides, to suppose that the mind, while indifferent towards an object, should choose to come under its influence, seems a contradiction; to suppose it otherwise than indifferent in the determining volition is to suppose that the motive has influence not only in the volition which it excites, but in that by which we determine to fall under its influence. If we should suppose that at first all moral objects were viewed by the mind with absolute indifference, and that it could have towards them what feelings it should choose, this would not help the matter in these previous volitions; some object must already have been pleasing: but by supposition it is not a moral object; so that by hypothesis this previous volition is not of an accountable nature; and as there is no virtue in these previous volitions, the necessity for them seems to argue a defect in the mind rather than a perfection. It is evidently no perfection in it that it should not be able to choose the things required without first choosing something else. By hypothesis, then, it could be no perfection or virtue to have this power, and nothing is more evident than that we do not possess it. But one thing is certain, that the only reason that this power is

asserted is a scepticism as to the inherent voluntariness of the acts themselves which are commanded or forbidden. For,

God has placed all holy volitions in the fact that certain objects, his own transcendent excellence for instance, are agreeable to us that we love them; the voluntariness which he has required, is the *being* in this state, and not in the manner, means or cause by which *we come* into it.—He has placed all sinful volition in being pleased with and loving objects which are of a nature perfectly opposed to the former. There is of course no other accountable volition. Now if there be no disposition to be rightly affected by these objects or otherwise, we cannot help the matter by supposing that it is by previous voluntariness. The truth is, if a volition be directed towards these moral objects, it is of a moral accountable nature, otherwise it is not what God has commanded or forbidden, and he takes no account of it. Those who oppose the proposition that the acts of innate affections are of a moral nature, do it in general on the ground that they do not flow from previous volition, and so are not voluntary, as if that which is voluntary only in its *cause*, were to be reckoned voluntary rather than that which is so in its *nature*. This separating voluntariness from virtuous or sinful acts and placing it in their cause, is absurd and the source of the most serious errors on moral subjects. It is because persons are unwilling to believe that God has actually placed his command on things which are the proper subjects of command. God has placed all the voluntariness which he requires or forbids in certain acts which are the subject of his law; these philosophers place it all in certain acts which are to precede those required—and they make God's commands fall on certain mental operations in their nature as involuntary as the beating of the heart or the heaving of the lungs. The great objection which the new school urge against an inherent disposition from which sinful volitions flow, is this: If these feelings spring from an innate disposition, then they come into existence without our willing it, as if the acts themselves were not our will, and as if, for a thing to be voluntary it must be the bare effect of volition and not volition itself.

But they say further, if these feelings spring from an *innate* disposition and not from previous volition, not only are they not of a voluntary nature, but more, as a consequence,

they are not of a moral nature. But God has placed all virtue in affections towards certain objects, and all sin in affections towards certain other objects: the only question with regard to the moral nature of these feelings must be simply this: Are they directed towards those objects which he has commanded or forbidden us to love? If they are, whatever may be their cause, they are of a moral nature: if not, whatever be their cause, they can have no moral desert. There is a transcendent excellence in the things which God has required us to love; and we are so constituted that we cannot but feel that it is the height of guilt to be indifferent towards them; indeed we cannot be indifferent to them, but through affections towards opposite objects.—We cannot prove moral accountability by bare reason; neither can we disbelieve it by the influence of the most subtil arguments. There is in the feelings themselves which God has required, aside from the causes of them, an inherent excellence which we necessarily respect; and there is in those which he has condemned, an odious nature, to that degree that the curse of God's law alone expresses their desert. God has placed all holiness in the fact that certain objects of transcendent excellence excite in us feelings of love; that these motives excite these feelings without any will of ours but what is contained in the feelings themselves; and all sin in the fact that certain other objects of an opposite character, become the objects in which we delight.

The great objection against considering the acts of the innate affections of a moral nature, is this: These affections, it is said, act only as they are acted upon; the act, or volition, takes place solely by the influence of the motive. Now, we have seen that it is absurd to insist that volition must be called forth by previous choice, instead of the object towards which it acts, upon which it fixes. The only question is, are the acts of these affections such as the law commands or forbids—are they affection for the same objects? If they are, whatever opinion we may have of their causes, we can have no doubt as to their nature; they are either holiness or sin. Now if we find a volition which has the scriptural character of God for its object, whether this love arises from an infused affection, or from previous volition, or without any supposable reason why it takes place rather than a contrary affection, still it must be considered as possessing both a voluntary and moral nature in itself.

We may stigmatize the inward disposition by the name of *susceptibility*, or call the object of it a *stimulant*, or the feeling itself an *emotion*, but the names do not alter the real nature of the things.

We suppose that if any internal acts of affection are delight in the true character of God, benevolence towards fellow beings, hatred of sin, humility in view of unworthiness, forgiveness of injuries, love for enemies, submission to the divine will, and faith in the divine promises, that such affections towards these objects, are of a voluntary and moral nature in themselves, they possess in themselves an inherent excellence, and borrow none from their cause; but these are all but so many various exhibitions of that love to God, which is the fulfilling of the law, and which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, which exists there as a principle, and is not a mere evanescent emotion. We suppose that acts of ambition, pride, envy, malice, hatred and revenge, are directly opposed to the feelings just mentioned; that they are the very feelings which the Scripture forbids throughout. These are what all Protestant confessions embrace under the name of concupiscence, which not only the Church, but the common sense of mankind has always considered as sinful. These are the causes of all crime, the passions which have produced all national calamity, and most individual suffering. We can conceive no worse passions—they are those which reign in hell, and may almost be said to constitute it. The common sense of mankind has always considered these feelings as voluntary in themselves, and of a moral nature. But mankind also consider them as the acts of affections which belong to our nature. It would be useless to trace them to previous volition, were there no absurdity in it, for they have all their voluntariness and moral odiousness in themselves; to suppose there is no reason in our nature why these arise rather than the opposite feelings, when moral objects are presented, is hardly philosophical; and as the new philosophy can gain nothing from such a supposition, it may be as well to trace them to those innate dispositions, from which the common sense of mankind has always supposed that they proceed.

The objection that they are effects and owe their existence to causes which are termed mere stimulants to excite them, is certainly frivolous. All volition implies that something is willed, that there is some object on which it fixes,

and either this object must call forth volition or previous volition must do it; but even this previous volition has a motive for its object. Self-determination implies not merely what is incomprehensible but what is self-contradictory. Volition must have an object from definition. Love to God must have the divine excellence for its object, and it is this, and not a previous volition which the law does not require, which calls it forth, and so of all acts of holy or sinful affection. God has placed all virtue in certain affections towards certain objects; he has not required to call forth these feelings by previous volition, or placed virtue in such volitions; he simply requires us to be thus and thus affected by certain objects, his own blessed character for instance, and all holiness consists in being thus affected by it, and that is the motive or object which is to affect us; he has denounced the curse of his law on the failure of being thus affected by it.

If the actions of any innate affections are directed towards moral objects, and are such as God has forbidden, then to call them mere emotions and teach that they have no moral character, is to unsettle first principles, to sap the foundations of public morals, and to introduce the most fatal infidelity.

If the action of innate affections, however, is not of a moral nature, then they may be considered as mere emotions with all safety, and it is introducing confusion into theology to view them in any other light. We have only to take care of them as we do our limbs, that they do no mischief, but as they are not acts of the will, they are no more of a moral character than the acts of memory or intellect.

We will briefly attempt to show that the acts of these affections which mankind have always considered as passions which belong to the human heart, that these alone are volition. These alone are exercised towards the real ultimate objects of volition. We commonly say that external objects, ends, and actions are the objects of volition; they are, but not its ultimate objects.

First with regard to actions. Two persons perform precisely the same external act of charity, but one from motives of ostentation, the other from benevolence towards the person relieved. But is the action which is the same in both cases the ultimate object of volition? Far from it—one individual really wills the honor which comes from men, the other the good of his fellow being. A third per-

son might perform the act from mixed motives and actually will both these objects.

A person may be impelled to perform an action, for instance a literary effort by a variety of separate inducements; he may be excited by ambition of distinction, envy of a rival, and a covetous desire of wealth; now here are several volitions with each a separate object, each by itself a moral act and sinful, and but one external action.

The same person may have certain inducements to perform an action, and others to forbear it; a forgiving spirit for instance, may prompt him to make a sacrifice in favor of an enemy, and the remains of resentment may dissuade him, and the will may balance between these for a time. The will may have opposite inclinations, by means of these, opposite feelings. But here are evidently two volitions, one which the divine law approves, and the other such as it condemns. The same passion may bias the will in opposite directions. A person may see that the effects of a certain action may be adverse to some object of his ambition, and favorable to another, and thus ambition will be an inducement to perform it, and an inducement to forbear it.

The same observations may be applied to what are called moral ends. Two persons may set forward for the ministry, one from pure ambition, the other from love to his Saviour, and, perhaps, various other motives of an opposite character, but all these are separate volitions, distinct moral acts. A person may commence a course of conduct from right affections, continue it, and quit it from those of an opposite character. But do we ever hear of actions or ends being chosen from any other feelings than those which have always been considered innate, from pure volitions? If there arise in the human mind volitions answering to all the innumerable objects which come before it, it is certain, however, that they have no names.

With regard to external objects which become the motives of volition, nothing is more clear than that they are not its ultimate objects. Several individuals desire a particular book, one from bare covetousness, another from a desire to disappoint a rival, another to acquire distinction by making the contents his own, another in order to bestow it upon a friend, and perhaps still another from most of these feelings united. The real object of volition in all these cases is different. It is not the book but something quite distinct.



An elegant bonnet excites certain desires in the mind of a young lady, let the fashion change and she views it with new feelings; let the customs of society change, so that it shall be a badge of disgrace, and she views it with feelings still different, but all the while it is the same bonnet. Two beggars solicit each a dollar as charity, they both will the same thing in appearance, but one really wishes nothing more than to gratify his appetite, while the other wishes for the relief of a distressed family. A person may desire a cane at a particular time to support his steps, or to defend himself, or to injure an enemy, or to make a figure, but these motives or volitions all have different ultimate objects, though in common conversation we say the cane is the object of them. The truth is, the acts of the innate moral affections, and those implanted by divine grace alone, are of a voluntary and accountable nature, and there are no other mental operations which have any claim to be considered of this character, or have ever even received a name.

Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, was as decided in his opposition to the doctrines of original righteousness, and original sin, as their present opponents, but more open in teaching self-determination. President Edwards, speaking on this subject, says, "The doctrine of original righteousness, or the creation of our first parents, *with holy principles and dispositions*, has a close connection in several respects with the doctrine of original sin; Dr. Taylor was sensible of this, and, accordingly, he strenuously opposes this doctrine in his book against original sin." The language of Dr. Taylor was this, "To say that God not only endowed Adam with a capacity of being righteous, but moreover, that righteousness and true holiness were created with him, or wrought into his nature at the same time he was made, is to affirm a contradiction, or what is inconsistent with the very nature of righteousness." "Adam," he continues, "could not be originally created in righteousness and true holiness, because he must choose to be righteous before he could be righteous; and, therefore, he must exist, he must be created, yea, he must exercise thought and reflection before he was righteous." To this President Edwards replies, "If these things are so, it will certainly follow, that the first choosing to be righteous is no righteous choice; there is no holiness or righteousness in it, because no choosing to be righteous goes before it. For he plainly speaks of *choosing to be*

*righteous* as what must go before righteousness. So that by his scheme, all righteousness and holiness is at once shut out of the world, and no door left open by which it can ever possibly enter into the world."

Mr. Hutchinson observes, "the ultimate end proposed by common moralists, is the happiness of the agent himself, and this certainly he is determined to pursue from instinct. Now, may not another instinct towards the public, or the good of others, be as proper a principle of virtue as the instinct toward private happiness? If it be said that actions from instinct are not the effect of prudence and choice, this objection will hold full as strongly against the actions which flow from self-love."

President Edwards remarks of the same views of the origin of holy and sinful volitions which prevail at present, "It is agreeable to the sense of men in all nations and ages, not only that the fruit or effect of a good choice is virtuous, but the good choice itself from whence that effect proceeds is so; yea, also the *antecedent good disposition, temper, or affection of mind, from whence proceeds that good choice, is virtuous*. This is the general notion, not that principles derive their goodness from actions, but that actions derive their goodness from the principles whence they proceed. Which supposes that a virtuous disposition of mind may be before a virtuous act of choice, and that, therefore, it is not necessary that their should first be thought, reflection, and choice, before there can be any virtuous disposition. If the choice be first, before the existence of a good disposition, what is the character of that choice? There can, according to our natural notions, be no virtue in a choice which proceeds from no virtuous principle, but from mere self-love or some animal appetites; therefore, a virtuous temper of mind may be before a good act of choice, as a tree may be before the fruit, and the fountain before the stream which proceeds from it."

## ART. VIII. ON THE EFFECTS OF REGENERATION.

It has been with many a matter of no small speculation how that so large a portion of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches could have been induced, within so short a period, to renounce the doctrines of original sin and regeneration, the two fundamental truths of the Christian system. Doubtless, a number of causes might have conspired to produce the result, but we think that we can name two which has a most decisive influence, and which are alone sufficient to account for the effect.

First, a spirit of bold speculation on theological subjects had infected the church. Dr. Thomas Scott had predicted that this alone would lead to infidelity. The writings of President Edwards had doubtless produced a taste for metaphysical discussions, but ere long those discussions became presumptuous. Subjects were attempted which were evidently beyond the powers of human reason. Divines attempted to tell how sin came into the world, almost as circumstantially as at the present day. But this was not enough; to carry out some favorite positions, the first principles of common sense and theology were assailed, the great principle of Hume's Scepticism was adopted by Christian divines, and the human soul made out to be a mere series of perceptions and exercises. But still these men had a high respect for the great evangelical system, but they were fostering a spirit of bold speculation among their pupils, exalting human reason as a source of truth at the expense of the Bible, and leading Christians to defend the doctrines of revelation with the same weapons, and the same spirit with which heretics opposed them. And it is remarkable that men who had the highest respect for the truths of the Gospel, have furnished the fundamental principle of the new heresy. The New Haven divines acknowledge that their's is what is called the "exercise system." It is at least true, that they borrow most of their reasoning from Dr. Emmons, as they obtained most of their early ad-

herents from his followers, but they reject with abhorrence his views of the divine efficiency in the production of holiness. It was not till reason had been to a very great extent substituted for revelation as a means of attaining theological truth, that the new system ventured to make a public appearance.

The reason above assigned may account for the appearance of these bold speculations, but it is far from accounting for their rapid and extensive circulation. We believe that the influence of partial and unscriptural views of regeneration tended to prepare the way for the reception of these errors, by producing spurious conversions and spurious revivals, and thus changing the character of the church itself. Such an undue proportion of attention had been directed to the doctrine of divine sovereignty to the exclusion of other points of Christian doctrine, that it had entirely changed the face of practical religion. All religion was resolved into submission to the divine will, and Christianity seemed to have become a purer kind of Stoicism. We say that these subjects received not so much an undue as a disproportioned attention, which threw other subjects into the shade. Other truths and branches of Christian character were almost overlooked. Long before the new views in theology began to prevail, it had become very common to present the most distorted and defective views of regeneration from the pulpit. Of the revivals of those days, we say that they differed entirely from the scenes of artificial excitement, and deliberate and systematic deception and delusion which have of late prevailed; but still, in conversing with those who entertained hopes, we were compelled to entertain and express our fears that a very great portion were deceived, and deceived by the preaching too often, and subsequent events have given too much confirmation of the justice of our suspicions as to a great portion of those conversions.

With regard to those who have secretly renounced the doctrines of original sin and regeneration, as the church has always understood those truths, we believe that the direct and only tendency of their preaching, is to delude and ruin immortal beings. But even among those who have not given up these precious truths, we believe that there exists either great unfaithfulness, or great obscurity in presenting Scriptural views of the effects of regeneration.

It is not enough, in general terms, to teach that regenera-

tion must be the work of divine power—a supernatural work. This may be taught in words, and instantly denied again, by describing conversion as something which requires no such influence—something which every man of common sense will instantly pronounce to be quite within human powers, something in harmony with the corrupt principles of the natural heart, and which almost any man may have who will but set about it, and this without any remarkable exertion of his powers.

We believe that he, who, while he gives orthodox views of the nature and efficient cause of regeneration, fails to make it a radical change, manifesting itself by an entire new life and conversation, is guilty of ruining souls. Or, if in his private instructions and conversation with those who are seeking a hope, the preacher contradict his public ministrations, if he consult his feelings at all or his interests; if he fail to encourage, guide, and assist the person to self-examination; if he do any thing calculated to send a soul into eternity with a false hope, he is accessory to his ruin, and incurs a guilt which no imagination can measure. Much more criminal is he who habitually in the pulpit sets aside the Scripture views of conversion, and gives such a modified and reduced standard of piety as must allure immortal beings to eternal perdition. What will be the condemnation of him who has abused the office of ambassador of Christ to co-operate with the enemy of souls, who has been supported by a confiding people, and spent his days in deluding and ruining them? But we have reason to fear that this is a criminality which is common, we had almost said general. We believe that even where the true doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Spirit is taught, that the most partial and delusive ideas of the nature of the change are exhibited; that there is great unfaithfulness in dealing with anxious sinners; that such exhibitions ruin immortal beings, and by corrupting the church, eventually make way for the admission of heresy.

We have been compelled to come to this conclusion, partly from the fact that so large a portion of professing Christians have so readily, and even greedily, embraced fundamental error, but chiefly from observation of the present condition of the church. Is not family prayer greatly neglected, secret prayer, perhaps, commonly, are not family government, family instruction in religion fallen into dis-

use? Do we see a contrast, or even much difference between the church and the better part of the community as respects their dealings, their spirit, temper, as to detachment from the world, and interest in things which may properly be called spiritual? Is there not the most conclusive evidence that professors do not give proof that they possess the Spirit of Christ, and that ministers cannot point to them as their epistle of commendation from Christ known and read of all men?

We are aware that very few entertain any doubts of their spiritual state, that still fewer experience any anxiety from such a source, and we can scarcely promise ourselves a hearing on the evidences of a change of heart, but we feel it our duty to present the subject.

It was an unfortunate discovery of certain divines, that conviction of sin, or that preparation of mind by which the Holy Spirit prepares the minds of sinners to receive a Saviour was unnecessary. It was common to call it a part of the waiting system. It was said that such a representation palsied the conscience; that men must be made to feel that faith and repentance are duties; something that man must do, and do now. This was a neonomian spirit, and prepared the way for the doings of the present evangelists; it was giving the impression that faith and repentance alone were duties, whereas the Holy Spirit in conviction, shows the sinner that the whole law is duty, places the justice of its whole claims, and its whole penalty, in such a light as to satisfy the mind forever on the points. One ray of his divine light does more than a thousand volumes on natural and moral ability.

Whatever may be said of conviction of sin as being unnecessary as a preparation for conversion, we believe that the sinner learns nothing in it but what is an essential part of the knowledge of every true Christian; these convictions of the justice of the demands and penalty of the law continue and increase through life.

We believe that the preaching of the law and extended views of its nature and spirituality, produce a sense of obligation, and affect the conscience much more than metaphysical discussions on the obligation of faith and repentance only. A man will not repent till he sees the justice of the demands of the law, and this, not by the light of the understanding to which these divines addressed most of their reasonings, but

by the light of conscience—neither will a man believe in a Saviour till he sees by the light of his conscience, not his understanding, the justice of the penalty of the law with regard to him, and the insufficiency of his own works to justify him.

In conviction of sin, a ray of light shines in upon the conscience—shows a man fully his obligations to have all the spiritual affections which the law demands, and at the same time the sinfulness of his own moral feelings, and his need of the aid of the Holy Spirit ; it shows the man at the same glance, his obligation, his corruption, and his dependence ; he sees the harmony of things which to carnal reason seem to stand in direct opposition.

By learning his obligation to the law of God, he knows his obligation to faith and repentance, also his obligation to submit to God's sovereignty. All the peculiar tests which some divines have set up, are contained in the Divine Law, and should have been insisted on as a part of it, and not been suffered to exclude it.

The sinner who has once learned his corruption from the Divine Law, will find no language adequate to express the value of those influences which alone must purify him.

A view of the justice of the penalty of the law, and his own inward corruption, show him fully that all his own works will be insufficient for his justification, that there is no hope for him but in the atoning blood of Christ.

We believe that these views of the insufficiency of his own strength for any good works, and the insufficiency of any good works for his justification, are something possessed by every Christian, something which cannot be produced by bare metaphysical reasoning, or reasoning from the Bible, it is produced by the influence of the Holy Spirit, increasing the light of conscience which alone gives us the sense of obligation.

In conviction of sin, a person sees his true condition ; what the law of God is, and what are his own relations to it. Men do not come into the world with a conscience which recognizes in full the claims of the law, and the sinfulness of their moral affections : and they live in a constant process of still farther blinding conscience. No reasoning whatever can resist the sophistry of a carnal heart. No reasoning can make men acknowledge the justice of the claims and the penalty of the law. By the teaching of the



Holy Spirit, the person knows not only his obligation to exercise faith and repentance, but infinitely more, his obligation to be perfectly holy—he knows the extent of his obligation, but he knows too the extent of his weakness, that his moral feelings constantly violate his moral obligations, and that grace alone can prevent this, that it is the work of Almighty power to fit his heart for heaven. He sees that the curse of God's law expresses only God's just feelings of displeasure towards him. He wants none of the reasoning of modern Pelagians to show him the necessity for the punishment of sin; he knows what it deserves, and he trembles at the thought of an angry God. He knows now what God is, and how he regards sin and sinners. No argument or persuasion can remove his fears, or inspire him with the least hope of mercy, for he knows the immense inconceivable mercy that is required to wash away his sins. Nothing will remove those fears and inspire him with confidence towards God, till his grace works in him a faith in the infinite merits of his Son. In conviction of sin he learns the true value of a Mediator to restore him to God, and when he has found him and embraced him, he has no language to express the preciousness of his Saviour; no language to express the length, depth, breadth, and height of the love which removes the endless wrath of God, and makes him his eternal friend.

In conviction of sin, the Holy Spirit teaches the sinner the nature and desert of sin, and that he has the eternal fountain of it in himself. In repentance, he works in him not a transient sorrow which exhausts itself in tears, but an inward hatred for sin which continues and increases through life. The man becomes the enemy of all sin actual and indwelling—feels the wretchedness of being under its dominion, and heartily makes it the great end of his life to be free from its dominion. This true repentance is not inspired by fear, but by that love of God which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. The true penitent hates sin because he sees it to be hateful—because he enters into the views of the lawgiver, sees it as he views it, and acquiesces in the justice of its punishment. He regards it with vastly greater disgust than any natural object, he makes it his great occupation to be delivered from it. He fears it more than suffering, and would rather incur any temporal evil than deliberately incur the displeasure of God.

He has no peace till he have made all possible reparation to all he has injured, in property, reputation, character, feelings, or interest. The repentance which stops short of reparation and restoration is insincere.

The true penitent is the enemy of all sin. He has no favourite fault which he indulges : he knows, indeed, more than others the sins that are transpiring in his heart, yet they are a grief and burden to him : but he does not commit deliberate acts of sin : he may, indeed, be hurried by surprise, or drawn unawares by a blinded conscience to what he soon condemns ; but he immediately returns with deep humiliation. A repentance that does not extend to all sin, and does not cause a man to make it the great business and employment of life to be more and more free from actual and indwelling sin, is really defective. It is vain to talk of different standards of piety here ; there is, and can be but one, and any repentance which does not produce this influence, and thus change the bent of the whole life, is radically defective, and will destroy the soul as surely as fundamental heresy or infidelity.

The true penitent shrinks from no duty, he is not governed by interest or inclination, but by conscience ; he undertakes those duties to which by nature we are peculiarly opposed, and grace makes them delightful. He can heartily forgive, and cordially love his enemies. Notwithstanding the injuries, abuse, misrepresentation, and slander, he can, and does love them, feels joy for their prosperity, grief for their afflictions, sympathy for their misfortunes, and with real satisfaction exerts his influence to advance their interest. He often succeeds in overcoming evil with good, and making friend of his enemies. Unless a person does this, and does it habitually, whatever else he may be, he is not a Christian ; he may be as good as the publicans, who love those who love them, but if he lack one trait of the Christian character, he lacks the whole. Cut off from the number of professing Christians those who have not this essential trait of holiness, and how many are left ?

The true penitent can humbly and thankfully receive reproof for those sins which we are too apt to call weaknesses and faults. He can, and habitually does take part against himself, and in holy severity, even go beyond the malignant sarcasms of the world. He confesses them, without excuse, without extenuation, not merely ashamed of

them, but sorry for them ; he habitually considers him as his true friend, who has been endeavouring to rescue him from his worst enemies.

The true penitent habitually performs the duties of the closet. We do not number the duty of secret prayer among those which are difficult to the Christian, but it is a drudgery to which the carnal heart does not readily submit, and which it maintains only as it were from compulsion. It is something positively commanded, and which no Christian can neglect or habitually perform in a careless or negligent manner. Cut off from the number of professors those who live in allowed disobedience to God, as respects this duty, (for they will be cut off at the last,) and how many remain ?

The true penitent habitually consults his conscience as to duty, and not his inclination ; he is a man of self-denial ; he habitually denies himself ; he does more, he labors to mortify sin. True repentance strikes at the very root of our corruptions. It attempts to subdue in the heart all those disorders which are the source of all sin in the life. Of what use is it to guard the conduct, when the springs of action are disregarded ; it is a mere external reformation which does not attempt to subdue ambition, envy, pride, and all the sinful dispositions of the heart. The real penitent watches these, forms no purpose to gratify them, and habitually endeavors to call his thoughts from the objects which tend to excite them. He does not foster them, for they are the indwelling sin from which all his actual sins proceed, which divine grace has made a burden to him, and from which it is the great object of his prayers, and the great occupation of his life to be delivered. That repentance which does not reach these, and make it the business of life to mortify them, is perfectly superficial. These are the great springs of human conduct. It is the business of the world to gratify them, and the great occupation of the Christian to mortify them ; he who is not the enemy of these, and engaged in a warfare against his own ambition, his pride, his love of fame, thirst for praise, for wealth, and distinction, is no Christian. Separate this class from the number of Christians, and who remain ?

We may call the acts of the innate moral affections mere emotions, may place all duty in regulating them ; we may teach that nothing which belongs to human nature is sinful, but this is only to teach men that it is innocent to break

God's law, for we transgress it in nothing else. The truth is, a very great proportion of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches have adopted what was a fundamental principle in the scepticism and impiety of the early French infidels, that whatever belongs to human nature must be constitutional and innocent. It was by this, that those corrupt men taught their disciples to justify every vice and abomination. But the Bible has condemned the innate moral affections, the common sense of mankind is in harmony with it, and the true Christian feels them to be that fund of indwelling sin under which he groans, and from which he desires deliverance.

Now, how many will you find who are real enemies to their own ambition, love of praise, thirst for distinction, for fame in some department or other, for wealth and honors? How many will lift even a finger against these? Who bewail these, consider them as their sin, and sigh for deliverance? Do not the greatest part of exemplary professors, instead of lending all their efforts to mortify these feelings, make it the great business of life, in some shape or other, to gratify them? Are not these what give to life its whole zest and flavor? What pretence can he have that he is sincere in cultivating humility, meekness, forgiveness, and all those graces which flow from love to God, while his whole aim and employment is to gratify ambition, and love for the world, pride, envy, and perhaps resentment?

The true penitent, who is dead to sin, makes it the great business of his life to cultivate that principle of love to God, which is the fulfilment of his law. This divine principle is not natural to the human heart, but is implanted in it by the Holy Spirit in regeneration; it is not an evanescent emotion which exists but a moment and then is extinguished for ever; it is a permanent principle, the source of all holy affections of which right actions are the mere external expression; it is the principle of spiritual life, a principle which must be guarded, cherished, and cultivated, and to cherish this, is the great business of the Christian's life. The Holy Spirit, who implanted this spark of life in the heart, dwells in the Christian to support it, not to supercede the necessity for his efforts, but to give efficacy to them. It cannot be that the true Christian can make it his business to cherish and gratify the opposite affections; he is sensible of the infinite condescension and mercy of this gra-

cious Agent in making his heart his abode, and his great occupation is to co-operate with him.

It is often said that this diligent culture of the spiritual affections is but a selfish pursuit of happiness, the person, it is said, ought to be engaged in the labors, self-denials, and fatigues of the Christian course. But what are the labors and self-denials of a service which is merely external, which is inspired by no holy affection? A thousand motives from our sinful nature may lead a person to give, to act, to maintain all the external duties of religion, while, to cultivate love to God, all the sinful principles of his nature must be habitually opposed, conquered, and mortified. The Christian bears within him two antagonist principles, the flesh and the spirit, love to the world, and love to God, one can flourish only as the other decays, the friendship of the world is enmity to God.

The true penitent uses all the means of grace in his great work, but makes the retirement of the closet his great dependence. He meditates, reads the Scriptures, and prays in secret, and God rewards him openly. The closet is the theatre of his fiercest conflicts, but the source of his highest happiness. This is the source from which he gains his relish for the more public duties of religion; it is the source of his strength for duty, his disposition to give, his resolution for labour and self-denial.

But some will say this course is visionary and enthusiastic; our great concern is with duty, and this alone should be the employment of life. Now, will it be said, that to cultivate, cherish, and strengthen the principle of love to God, is something quite distinct from duty? Is the love of God a mere feeling, an involuntary act or emotion of the mind that has no relation to practice, and is not a duty? Wherever the principle exists, holy obedience is the necessary consequence. He that loveth God keepeth his commandments. Love is the fulfilment of the law—love to God and man the substance of all the divine precepts, and the sum of man's moral obligations. It must be the internal motive of all external duties, or they are of no value whatever. Wherever it exists, it leads the possessor to an obedience that is cordial, habitual, and universal; makes the man delight in self-denial, in sacrifices for the good of others in the consecration of property, talent, reputation, and influence, and all things to the glory of God. Who

would suppose that any claiming the appellation of Christian, would venture to pronounce it enthusiastic to cherish the principle of love to God, to obey that precept which comprehends all the rest? Is it enthusiastic to make that which is his great duty his great occupation? The true Christian regards it his highest happiness, the perfection of his nature, as well as his duty, to have his heart on the only object worthy of it, an object which will ever remain the same. He has the source of his happiness placed beyond the reach of circumstances and change.

If a man's repentance be not such as to make it his ruling principle, his great end, and main employment, to yield obedience to the law, to cultivate the holy affections of heart in which that places all duty, that man's repentance is vain, and will as surely ruin him as atheism itself. Cut off then from the number of Christians all who are not devoting their energies in dependence on divine grace to this work, and who remain?

But some may be ready to inquire, is no account to be made of external duties? We have been describing what is the principle of them. Love to God alone will lead to a regard to his authority in all our doings and dealings; this alone will lead the man habitually to consult his conscience and not his inclinations. The believer habitually inquires what is the will of God: not from what source he may receive the most happiness, but what is right, and if he fail, he immediately repents, and repairs the evil if it be in his power. Unless a person habitually consult his conscience in his actions, if he habitually obey his inclinations, he is the slave to his fleshy heart, and lives only to fulfil the desires of an unrenewed nature.

Whoever is the slave of covetousness is an idolater; whoever does not habitually live up to the rules of strict integrity is an extortioner; whoever, to favour his party, political or religious, either makes or gives his sanction to misrepresentations, is a liar, and the Bible assures us that the covetous, liars, and extortioners, shall not have a part in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever, from a regard to his own ease, interest, or advancement, or from mere fear, is silent when the cause of truth demands his aid, who fears to defend truth, and winks at the efforts of heretics to undermine it; this man is not gathering with Christ, but scattering abroad.

We have not described some high attainments made only

by a few Christians; we have confined ourselves to those which belong to every Christian, which are but a definition of true piety.

But it is said who then can be saved? This work is above our powers and hopes. It is, indeed, infinitely beyond man's powers, and it is for this reason that the Holy Spirit has undertaken it, and all that the Christian does, he ascribes it to his efficiency, he gives God the glory; he places all his works not to his own account, but wholly to the praise of God's grace.

Knowing the justice and holiness of God, the extent of his own guilt, and the utter insufficiency of his own works for his justification, he places his whole dependence on the blood of Christ for pardon; he daily lives in this dependence, and glories only in the cross of Christ.

Now, there is no medium between Scriptural regeneration and impenitence. Whoever being set as a teacher of the Gospel, makes any thing short of the Scriptural account of regeneration, a ground of hope is encouraging men to hope in that which will ruin them eternally; he is laboring for their destruction, and becomes accountable for it. Though he does not advance heresy, he is raising up those who are unfriendly to the truths of the Gospel in the church—those who will, by their influence or lives, bring disgrace upon them. He is as surely, though more slowly, preparing the way for heresy, as though he taught it in the most public manner.



## LITERARY NOTICES.

*The Christian Father at Home: or, a manual of Parental Instruction, in two parts; I. On the necessity of Salvation; II. On the use of Salvation. By W. C. Brownlee, D. D.*

The name of the author of this neatly printed little volume is a sufficient guarantee for its orthodoxy among all those who are unaccustomed to modern interpretations of the ancient formulas of christian doctrine. In this day of a latitudinarian spirit, when men are wise above what is written, and adventure irreverently on bold assertion, concerning the government of God, and what the governor of the universe should do, and ought to do; it is a token for good, to find issuing from the press in an attractive and proper form, books, designed to lead the youthful mind, in the "good old way" of scriptural truth, and sound doctrine.

From a cursory examination of "*The Christian Father at Home*," we think it well calculated, both to interest and instruct. The dulce et utile are here finely proportioned; so that while there is no paucity in "rural description, and narrative," these beautifully drawn sketches of the outer world, are finely blended with much profitable theology and wholesome sentiment.

We cannot close our notice of this work without calling the attention of our readers to the author's preface. "I am more and more convinced, from daily experience, that deep, close, and thorough doctrinal instruction is the only true and substantial foundation of all christian training and discipline in a family. The purest and most remarkable reformation times in the churches and families of God, have been uniformly remarkable for bold, thorough-going exhibitions of Gospel doctrines." We believe this is a correct statement, and one important to be heeded at the present day. We hope Dr. Brownlee will be encouraged to proceed in his designed "scheme" of instruction for the youthful mind.

---

*Letters on the origin and progress of the New Haven Theology. From a New England minister to one at the South.*

While a Unitarian maxim has been, "it is of little consequence what a man believes, provided his conduct be correct," taking it for granted that principle and practice have no union, another class of errorists spread the mantle of charity over almost all the departures from sound doctrine. They say there is no difference between themselves and those who profess to hold other views of truth. It is a mere difference of statement, they aver, a distinction in phraseology, with some slight variation in the philosophy of religion, but nothing fundamental, nothing of serious moment. It is of no consequence, in their view, whether man is innately a sinner, or becomes such by the seductive power of corrupt example; whether he needs a Savior, or can save himself; whether he is operated upon by extraneous influence in turning to God, or whether it is through contingent volition, or a self-determining power; whether his obedience springs from a desire to promote the divine glory, or arises from a dictate of self-love in order to be secured from destruction.

We have, in this series of letters, an expose of the theological sentiments of the New Haven divines from their own writings. They cannot say that certain sentiments are imputed to them, or which they disclaim; for we have, verbatim et literatim, their own statements. Neither can it be said that these quotations are unfair because separated from their connection, since, in the opinion of every candid opponent to their views, they agree with the general system which they avow as their belief. A single sentence may contain the essence of a creed spread over a volume. As honest readers and writers, we should admit the common sense interpretation of language, and not torture it into a meaning foreign from common usage, to answer a purpose. We are not aware that the New Haven Theologians have fully and explicitly denied the sentiments imputed to them in this little volume, or even retracted them as they are from their own acknowledged Quarterly.

In proof that "self-love is the primary cause of all moral action," Dr. Taylor says, "The being constituted with a capacity for happiness, desires to be happy; and knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects, considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived; and as in this respect he judges or estimates their relative value, so he chooses one or the other as his chief good." "Of all specific voluntary action, the happiness of the agent, in some form, is the ultimate end."

Again, "Infants die. The answer has been given a thousand times, brutes die also. But Mr. Harvey replies, 'animals are not subjects of the moral government of God.' Neither are infants previous to moral agency; for what has moral government to do with those who are not moral agents? Animals, and infants previous to moral agency, do therefore stand on precisely the same ground in reference to this subject. Suffering and death afford no more evidence of sin in one case than in the other." With these brief extracts we close our notice of the letters, and would at the same time commend them to the attention of those who may wish, within a short compass, to have presented before them the character of the New Haven Theology."

---

*The Power of Faith: a sermon preached at Constantinople, August 6th, 1837, on the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Dwight, embracing a brief sketch of her life and character. By W. Goodell. To which is added, a Sermon preached in Constantinople, August 13th, 1837. By H. G. O. Dwight. New-York: Ezra Collier, 148 Nassau Street.*

---

*Experimental and Practical Views of the Atonement. By Octavius Winslow, pastor of the Second Baptist Church, Brooklyn, New-York.*

This volume, as the title imports, is eminently practical. The writer appears to be deeply imbued with the spirit of his subject. His great aim is, to insist upon experimental religion, as founded upon and sustained by Scriptural views of the Atonement. While we might not adopt every expression of the author, we are sure, that no sincere Christian can rise from the perusal of this work, without a renewed impression of the inestimable value and variety of the blessings purchased by the blood of Christ. The special design of the writer may be far from

inappropriate, when, through the exigencies of the times, the minds of the best of men are liable to be wholly diverted from spiritual religion—to doctrinal discussion—to argumentative theology—while others are occupied with vain jangling. We hope this important end will be answered.

---

*A Treatise on the Offices of Christ.* By George Stevenson, minister of the Gospel, Ayr. First American Edition.

The very title of this book is worthy of notice. The particular offices of the Redeemer have been very much overlooked. We find more in the Bible and the Assembly's Catechism on this subject, than we often hear from the pulpit. The strain of preaching for many years has been such as to cast this all important subject into the shade. The new and fashionable views of the atonement, as a mere exhibition, combine with the newly discovered powers of human nature to restore itself, to give the impression that the offices of the Mediator are of small and questionable importance. The work here presented to the American public, is one of no ordinary merit. It is both seasonable and important. The entire volume furnishes a fine sequence of thought, argument, and illustration. Perspicuity and form of sentiment, with candid and Scriptural views of truth are here combined.

The author's views of imputation, and the nature of the atonement, are ably sustained. It may be interesting to some, to be informed that the views of Drs. Hopkins and Dwight, and President Maxey, are examined on this subject by the author. As no extended analysis can here be given of this volume, we hope the Christian public will avail themselves of the opportunity furnished by the American publisher, of possessing it. And we indulge this hope, with the conviction that it will be read with no small degree of interest.

---

*"The Hebrew Wife;" or the Law of Marriage examined in relation to the Lawfulness of Polygamy, and to the extent of the Law of Incest.* By S. G. Dwight, with an introductory recommendation by Ralph Wardlaw, D. D. Glasgow, 1837.

We give the following extracts from Dr. Wardlaw's Introduction :

The author informs us of the way in which, by the occurrence of a particular case in his practice as a lawyer, he was led to the investigation of the subjects of this volume. The circumstances and the result of that case were extraordinary : and it is no wonder that they had the effect mentioned. My estimate of the value of his treatise may be learned by the reader, when I say that I regard the occurrence of that case, by which such a direction and impulse were given to the author's mind, as happily providential. The treatise was first commended to my notice in a letter from a friend on the American side of the Atlantic, bearing reference to a case of marriage, in which it was the writer's opinion, as it is my own, that the prohibitory law of God, however unconsciously, and however much in accordance with existing sentiment and practice, had been transgressed : and having procured a copy from the present publisher, and perused it with close attention and with no slight interest, I had gone but a little way, when I was an-

tified that I was reading the work of a master in dialectics; and this impression was undiminished when I had reached the close. I was charmed with the lucid arrangement and the logical precision, with which, by consecutive steps, he conducted his argument to its conclusion. I mean not to say that in each successive step he was equally satisfactory; but, taking it on the whole, I experienced it to be,—considered simply as a specimen of ratiocination,—a *treat*, superior to any thing of the kind I had for a long time enjoyed.

It was no small recommendation of the work, that it served to settle, on so well ascertained a basis of divine authority, the principles of jurisprudence and of morals, respecting the important subjects of which it treats; and thus at once to direct legislators in the framing of their public statutes, moralists in the construction of their systems of practical ethics, and individuals (especially in peculiar circumstances of temptation, such as not unfrequently occur,) in the regulation and restraint of their affections. This last consideration is one of prime importance, and of great general interest.

With such impressions as these of "THE HEBREW WIFE," I cannot decline compliance with the request of the Glasgow publisher (the first, so far as I am aware, in this country,) to introduce it to the public. As the "*Hora Biblica* of a Lawyer," the work is no less creditable to the literary and theological than to the professional attainments of the author, and in this view it forcibly reminded me of a scene at college, in the days of my youth,—a scene of no little diversion, if not of great surprise, in the Professor's Pench,—when a student, who has since been long an eminent professional lawyer in our own city, carried the prize from the whole host of rising divines, for an essay on "*the Pelagian Controversy*."